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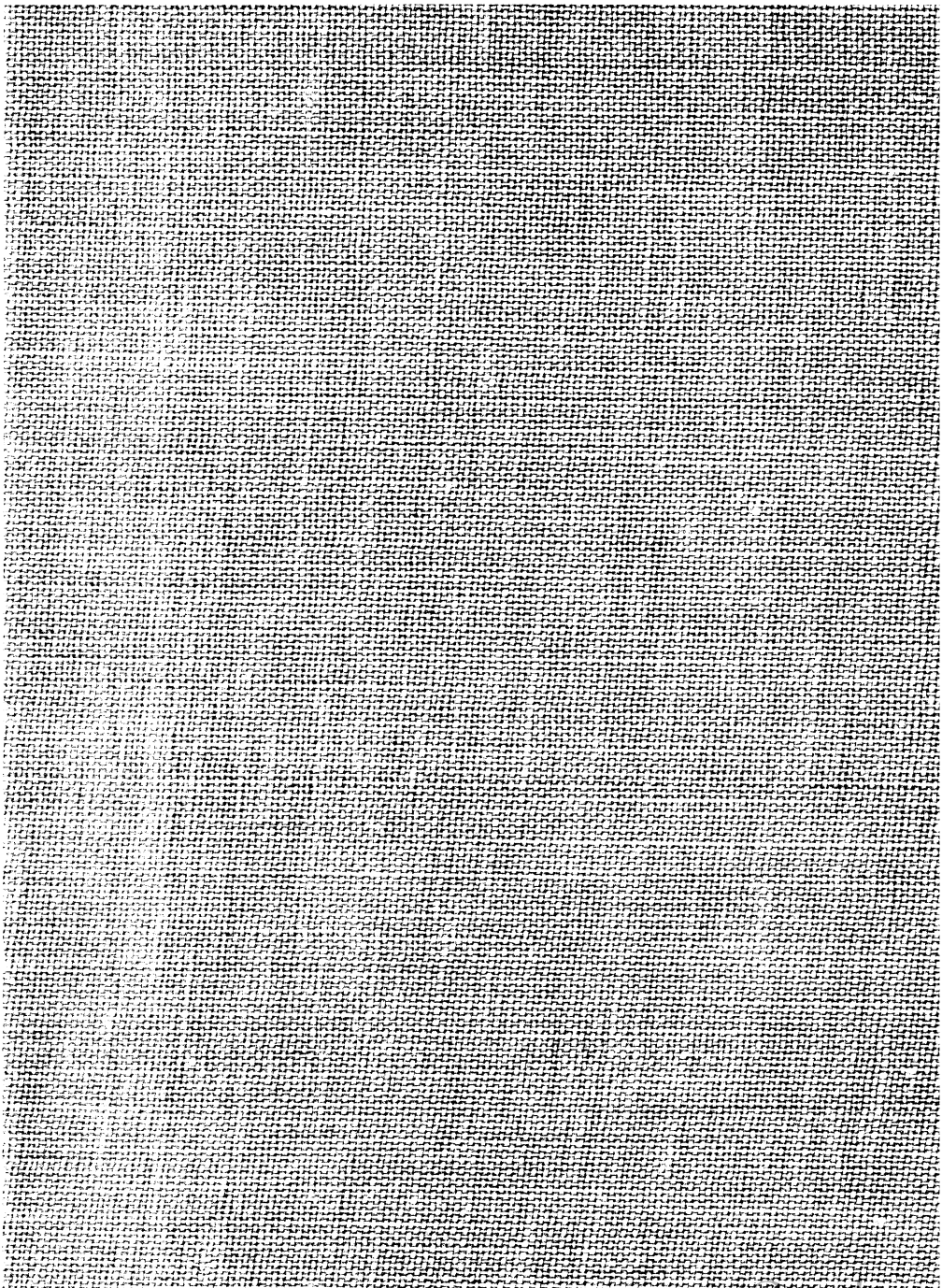

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Caroline Hodgson

from her affectionate Aunt

22nd August 1844.

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THE

DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

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Drawn by T. Wageman. *Engraved by W. Finden.*

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

London, Edward Moxon, Dover Street 1840.

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THE

DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.
MDCCCXLI.

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LONDON:
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By Permission,

THESE VOLUMES OF MY COLLECTED DRAMATIC WORKS

ARE RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED,

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUCHESS OF KENT,

BY

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS'S MUCH INDEBTED AND MOST OBEDIENT
HUMBLE SERVANT,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

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CAIUS GRACCHUS:

A TRAGEDY.

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TO

JOHN PATTERSON, ESQ.,

BRIDGE STREET, BLACKFRIARS.

My Dear Sir,

At your suggestion I wrote this Tragedy, and to you I dedicate it.

With best wishes for your happiness, and that of your family

I am, my dear Sir,

Your obliged and faithful Friend and Servant,

J. S. KNOWLES.

Glasgow,
November, 1823.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT DRURY LANE, IN 1824.)

Flaminius	Consuls	Mr. Thompson.
Opimius		Mr. Archer.
Fannius	Patricians	Mr. Powell.
Tuditanus		Mr. Webster.
Caius Gracchus	Tribunes	Mr. Macready.
Drusus		Mr. Pope.
Licinius	Friends of Caius Gracchus	Mr. Penley.
Pomponius		Mr. Mercer.
Vettius		Mr. Younge.
Fulvius Flaccus		Mr. Yarnold.
Titus	Plebeians	Mr. Terry.
Probus		Mr. W. Williams.
Marcus		Mr. Gattie.
Sextus	Servants to the Patricians	Mr. Fitzwilliam.
Quintus		Mr. Hughes.
Lucius	Page to Caius Gracchus	Miss Carr.
Cornelia	Mother of Caius Gracchus	Mrs. Bunn.
Licinia	(Wife of C. Grac.)	Mrs. W. West.
Livia	(Friend of Licinia)	Miss Smithson.
Lucilla	(An Attendant)	

Priests, Lictors, Soldiers, Citizens, &c.

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CAIUS GRACCHUS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome—six Citizens discovered.*

Enter MARCUS *and* TITUS, *looking occasionally back, as if observing something passing behind them.*

Mar. Who is that next him in mourning?
Tit. His nephew; the rest are common friends.
Poor Vettius! no one will plead for him.
Mar. Peace! they are coming on.

Enter VETTIUS *and his four Friends, in mourning, followed by* PROBUS *and twelve other Citizens.*

Vet. Weep not, my friends, for me; for Rome—for Rome
Reserve your tears. Her pride is turn'd to shame;
Her wealth to poverty; her strength to weakness;
Her fair report into a blasted name,
Which owns no grace of virtue. Who would thrive
In Rome, let him forget what honour is,
Truth, reverence for the gods, respect for man;
Let him have hands consort with deeds, whose names
The doer whispers, while he cannot force
His eyes to go the way of his hands. Ay, gaze,
Ye poor, despised, and outcast sons of Rome!
That crouch to your own power, by men more strong,
Only because more daring, wrench'd from you!
Ay, gaze; and see your lovers, one by one,

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Cut off; and never curse, unless it be
Your own hands, that you dare not stretch to save them!

[VETTIUS *and his Friends go out.*

Tit. Masters, we are in a sorrowful plight indeed, when such a friend as Vettius spurns us.

Mar. See! who is that he stops to speak to?

Tit. Know you not? Why, you've seen him as often as you've seen your own hand. 'Tis the senator Fannius—that Fannius, that looks so sweetly on the people, and, for all that, never yet did them a good turn.

Mar. O! is it he?

Tit. To be sure it is! See how he leans to Vettius, and seems to pity him. I warrant you there's a tear in his eye now, although his heart would laugh to tell you how it came there. See, he puts his hand upon his breast; that's an appeal to his honesty, which is always sure to be out of the way, whenever any one else happens to call upon it. Oh, he's a proper patrician!

Mar. Think you they will condemn Vettius?

Tit. Think you he is a friend to the people?

Mar. Who doubts that he is?

Tit. Who doubts, then, they will condemn him?

Mar. See! Fannius quits him.

Tit. And he's as much his friend as ever he was. His absence will profit him just as much as his presence.—Yonder comes Licinius, the brother-in-law of Caius Gracchus. Who knows but Caius will speak for Vettius, who was his brother Tiberius's friend?

Mar. Not he! He never appears in the assemblies of the people.

Pro. No; he loves to keep house better. He is married, you know; and his wife is a fair woman. No wonder he prefers her company to ours.

Mar. Do they say he is a man of any parts?

Tit. Yes; he assisted his brother Tiberius once, when he was tribune; and he was thought to be of great promise. 'Tis said he is much given to study.

Mar. 'Twould seem so, indeed; and that he had not yet found out it was the patricians who murdered his brother. I would have taken more revenge for a cur

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of mine that had been lamed, than Caius took for his brother that was murdered. What revenge did he take? None! He kept house, while the patricians buried his brother in the Tiber! Rome has nothing to hope from him.

Pro. Nay, that's certain. He'll never die for the people.

Mar. Die! No, nor live neither.

Tit. Silence! Licinius is here.

Enter LICINIUS *and* CAIUS GRACCHUS.

Lic. Health to you, master!

Mar. Health to Licinius!

Caius. [*To* LICINIUS.] The people look coldly on me.

Lic. Hang them! They show fine airs at their own handywork. I'll speak to them.

Caius. Gently, I pray you; they are bare and hungry, houseless and friendless, and my heart bleeds for them.

Lic. What is the cause of your collecting?

Lit. We come to see Vettius condemned.

Lic. Why do you say condemned? The laws are to try him. He will have justice.

Mar. Ay, from the patricians!

Lic. What of the patricians? Are not the patricians just?

Mar. Not to the people.

Lic. Why not?

Mar. Because they have the power to be otherwise. They have as great dominion over the people, as over their oxen; and so they treat them like their oxen,—unhide them, hack them up, and feed upon them.

Lic. Are the people, then, no better than their oxen, that they endure all this?

Mar. What can the people do? They have no friends that will speak, or act for them. The people can do nothing of themselves—they have no power. If the people could find friends——

Lic. Peace! peace! If you gain friends, you lose them straight.
Whoe'er would die for you, may die for you.

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You shrug, you shiver, and you whine; but he
That pities you, has need himself of pity.
You make a big shout, and a frightful face,
But in your acts are little to be feared.

Mar. Are you against us, too? You that were Tiberius's friend?

Lic. Who but his friend should be against you? You
That fell from him in danger, who to you
In danger clung? Who would not be against you?
Drowning, you make a cry; and when a hand
Is found to keep your head above the flood,
And bear you safe to land, at the first wave
That booms upon you—idiots in your fear!
You mar his skill, and sink him to the bottom!

Mar. Is that our way?

Lic. Ask you for friends, who to your friends are foes?
I would that Caius Gracchus now were here,
Whose brother you gave up to death.

Mar. We gave!

Lic. Ye gave! When, in the exercise of your rights,
The nobles, with their herd of slaves and clients,
Drove you—a base herd to be so driven!—
With clubs and levers from the market-place,
What did you then? Like spectres, with your fear,
Livid and purged of substance, you glared on,
And saw Tiberius, mangled with their staves,
Into the Tiber thrown, as butchers cast
The entrails to the tide.

Caius. No more, Licinius;
Pray you, no more; you are too stern with them.

Lic. Too stern! Would the patricians learn of me,
I'd teach them how to cater for the people.
They should not have a vote. If free-born men
Will crouch like slaves, why would you have them freemen?

Caius. It is his mode, friends; let him be; ne'er mind him.

[LICINIUS *and* CAIUS GRACCHUS *go out.*

Mar. 'Tis plain Licinius is no friend of ours.

Tit. He says truth. You suffered the patricians and their slaves to murder Tiberius.

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Mar. If Licinius is so bitter against us, what must we expect from Caius?

Tit. Yet would he have stopped Licinius when he railed at us. Who knows but Caius would befriend the people if he could?

Mar. Not he! He'd hang the people if he could—Come, masters; to the forum. Farewell, Tiberius! He would not see Vettius accused without defending him.—'Twill be long before we shall see such another friend as Tiberius! [*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*The Forum—the Tribunal, on which is the Curule Chair, six Lictors on each side—an Altar—a Rostrum.*

FLAMINIUS, OPIMIUS, TUDITANUS, FANNIUS, *and Senators, discovered.*

Opi. How would you cure a state o'errun with evils,
But as you'd cleanse a garden rank with weeds?
Up with them by the roots! The slothful hand
That will not bend it to the needful work,
Mars its own ease, and profitless expends
The labour which it grudges. Why falls Tiberius,
If not his coadjutor? Vettius free,
Gracchus should have been free, and Rome a slave.

Fla. Know you what friend he trusts with his defence?

Tud. 'Tis rumour'd, but I say not with what truth,
That, hopeless of acquittal, he will plead
Guilty, and throw himself upon our mercy.

Opi. Our mercy, then, is mercy to ourselves;
In showing which, we dare not pardon him.
Caius, I trust, will not appear for him.

Fan. Not he; he shuns all care of public questions,
And seems to be a mild retiring man.
He is not of the temper of Tiberius;
Or, if he is, he does not emulate
His fate.

Opi. I would not have him speak for Vettius:
His voice would be omnipotent against us.

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Fan. See, Vettius is at hand! Opimius,
You will conduct the prosecution.

[FLAMINIUS *ascends the tribunal—the Patricians follow, and remain at the foot of the steps—* OPIMIUS *goes and ascends the rostrum.*

Enter VETTIUS *with his Friends, followed by* TITUS, MARCUS, *and* Citizens.

Opi. Vettius, stand forth!
Vet. [*Advancing.*] Behold, Opimius,
The sacrifice is ready!
Opi. The false man
Is his own sacrificer. Gentle Romans,
When shall we live as brothers? Is not Rome
Our common mother? Why should we, her sons,
Be foes? Ye powers that favour civil concord,
Prepare your vengeance, for the fratricide
Foments distrust among us.
Tit. Opimius pays the people court.
Mar. Yes, he rides us well. He strokes us, when we do not need the spur. O, we are gentle beasts!
Opi. You, Spurius Vettius, I accuse of treason.
What answer you?
Vet. That, since the times decree
To innocence, what was in ancient days
The penalty of guilt, I am prepared
To suffer your award, and answer—guilty!

[*Goes under the rostrum.*

Fla. And wave you all defence?
Vet. When knew you, consul,
A man already cast to make defence?
I seem at large, but well am I advised
My cause is tried, and final sentence pass'd.
If you would have me use a Roman's right,
Show me the Romans I shall claim it of.
Call you these Romans? Why, your very slaves
Put on a prouder port, and cower not thus
Before you!
Opi. Hear you his seditious speech?
But he convicts himself. Say, Romans, say,
What penalty do you adjudge the traitor?

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Tud. Let it be death.

Tid. Nay, good Tuditanus, name some other punishment. We will consent to banish him.

Opi. It is too mild a sentence. Let it be death!

Senators. Ay, death!

Fla. Come down, Opimius, help us to collect
The votes.

[OPIMIUS *descends from the rostrum, and goes down behind the* Citizens.

Vet. O, Romans! he that is content
To live among you, prostrate as you are,
Should suffer worse than death!

Opi. Your votes!

CAIUS GRACCHUS *appears in the rostrum.*

Caius. Opimius, hold!

(*Upon hearing* CAIUS GRACCHUS *the people shout, press round the rostrum, and cry* "Caius! Caius Gracchus! Caius! Caius!")

Opi. How! Gracchus in the rostrum!

Caius. Hold, good Opimius! do not yet collect
The votes.

Tit. & Citizens. No! no!—No votes!

Mar. Speak, Caius Gracchus! speak!

Caius. I come to plead for Vettius.

Tit. Go on! go on!

Caius. The brother of Tiberius for the friend!

Mar. Noble Caius, go on!

Caius. I pray you, gentle friends, if I should make you
A poor, confused, disjointed, graceless speech,
Let it not hurt the man for whom I plead.
If I should falter—if my heart should rise
Into my throat, and choke my utterance,
Or if my eyes should with a torrent drown
My struggling words, let it not, I beseech you,
Let it not hurt the man for whom I plead!

Mar. Tiberius lives again! Tiberius speaks!

Caius. Tiberius lives again! Alas, my friends!
Go ask the Tiber if he lives again;
Cry for him to its waters; they do know
Where your Tiberius lies, never to live

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Again. Their channel was his only grave,
Where they do murmur o'er him; but, with all
The restless chafing of their many waves,
Cannot awake one throb in the big heart
That wont to beat so strong, when struggling for
Your liberties!

Tit. Noble Tiberius!

Mar. Noble Caius! See how he weeps for his brother!

Opi. Their hearts are his already. Our labour's lost.

Caius. What is't you do? Is it to banishment
Or death, you are about to doom that man?
Know you no heavier punishment for those
That love you? Rather let them live, to hear
You groan beneath the burdens of the great,
And bear it!—To behold you vilely spurn'd
By clients, bondsmen, hirelings, and bear it!
To see you griped by heartless usury!
To hear your children cry to you for food,
Without a shelter for your wretched heads,
Or land enough to serve you for a grave,
And bear it! To a Roman, such as Vettius,
What banishment, what death, were suffering
Equal to life like this?

Tit. Most true! most true!

Mar. Vettius is a friend to the people, and therefore he is accused.

First Citizen. Ay, that's his crime.

Second Citizen. He's innocent.

Tit. & Mar. Vettius is innocent!

Opi. Have you done, Caius?
For, by your leave, I will produce my witnesses.

Vet. They are the creatures of thy tampering;
Wretches that feed upon the victims of
Thy cruelty.

Opi. Hoa, there! My witnesses!

Mar. No witnesses! no witnesses!

Tit. Speak, Gracchus, speak!
We'll hear you, Gracchus, before a thousand witnesses.
—Go on!

Citizens. Go on! go on!

Caius. Romans! I hold a copy of the charge,

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And depositions of the witnesses.
Upon three several grounds he is arraign'd:
First, that he strove to bring the magistracy
Into contempt; next, that he form'd a plot,
With certain slaves, to raise a tumult; last—
And were there here the slightest proof, myself
Would bid him sheathe a dagger in his breast,—
That he conspired with enemies of Rome,—
With foreigners—barbarians, to betray her!
The first, I'll answer: Vettius is a Roman,
And 'tis his privilege to speak his thoughts.
The next, I'll answer: Vettius is a freeman,
And never would make compact with a slave.
The last I'll answer: Vettius loves his country;
And who that loves his country would betray her?
But, say they, 'We have witness against him.'
Name them! Who stands the first upon the list?
A client! I'll oppose to him a senator.
Who next? A slave! Set down a Roman knight!
Who follows last? The servant of a Questor!
I'll place a Tribune opposite to him!
How stand we now? Which weighs the heavier?
Their Questor's servant, or my Tribune?—Their
Slave, or my Roman knight?—Their client, or
My senator? Now, call your witnesses.

Mar. We'll have no witnesses!

Tit. For your sake, Caius, we acquit him.

Mar. Vettius is innocent.

Citizens. Ay! ay! ay!

Mar. The tribes acquit Vettius by acclamation.

Citizens. We do! we do!

Opi. Hear me, I say!

Citizens. No! no! no!

Caius. [*Descending from the rostrum.*] Their voices are against you, Opimius!

Fla. To please the people, we withdraw our charge.

Citizens. Huzza! huzza!

Caius. Come Vettius, come! my brother's friend is free!

Citizens. Huzza! huzza!

(CAIUS GRACCHUS, VETTIUS, *and* Citizens, *go out.*)

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Fla. This was their policy!—What's to be done?
Opi. Remove him from the city, and you nip
The danger in the bud. I'll take him for
My Questor, if you'll name him to the office,
And render good account of him. Who waits
Until a reptile stings him, ere he crushes it?
Tread on it at once!
Fla. Your counsel pleases me.
Here's the commission I design'd for Carbo,
All but the name, fill'd up. In Carbo's place,
I'll insert Caius, and despatch it to him.
Opi. I leave Rome ere an hour.
Fla. He shall have orders
Most positive to bear you company.
Opi. Of your decision you shall reap the fruits,
Or, when you name your friends, leave out Opimius!
[OPIMIUS *and* TUDITANUS *go out, the scene closes on the rest.*

SCENE III.—CAIUS GRACCHUS'S *House.*

Enter LIVIA *and* LICINIA.

Lici. I am the happiest wife in Rome, my Livia!
The happiest wife in Rome.
Livia. I doubt it not!
But there's Flaminius' wife, the other day,
Scarce from the forum to her house could pass
For salutations, that her husband won
The consulate.
Lici. That day, my Caius sat
At home with me, and read to me, my Livia.
Little cared I who won the consulate!
Livia. And there's Lectorius has obtain'd a government;
His wife will be a queen!
Lici. Well, let her be so!
My queendom is, to be a simple wife.
This is my government, my husband's house,

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Where, when he sits with me, he is enthroned.
Enough. You'll smile; but, Juno be my witness!
I'd rather see him, with his boy upon
His knee, than seated in the consul's chair,
With all the senate round him.

[*During this speech she pulls forward the table, &c. and places her embroidery.*

Livia. Yet his greatness
Must needs be thine.

Lici. I do not care for greatness:
It is a thing lives too much out of doors;
'Tis any where but at home; you will not find it
Once in a week, in its own house, at supper
With the family. Knock any hour you choose,
And ask for it; nine times in ten they'll send you
To the senate, or the forum, or to such
Or such a one's, in quest of it! 'Tis a month
Since Caius took a meal from home, and that
Was with my brother. If he walks, I walk
Along with him, if I choose; or if I stay
Behind, it is a race 'twixt him and the time
He promised to be back again, which is first;
And when he's back, and the door shut on him,
Consummate happy in my world within,
I never think of any world without.

Livia. Well, then, you are the happiest wife in Rome.

Lici. Tell me, and did Flaminius' wife weep, Livia,
That day that Rome did salutation unto her?

Livia. Weep!—No; why should she weep?

Lici. For happiness.
Do you see? I cannot talk of Caius, but
I weep, so blessed happy am I!—There's
Cornelia; that's her step I hear. She is
The kindest mother to me, Livia; though
She sometimes chides me, that I'd have my Caius
Live for his wife alone.

Enter CORNELIA.

Cor. Good day, my Livia.
Now would I lose my head, could I not tell
What this fair thing, that calls me mother, has

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Been talking of: if not her husband, then
For once hath the hundredth chance turn'd up, with all
The ninety-nine against it!
Lici. Well, a wife
May talk of her husband.
Cor. Did I not tell you so?
Well, well! I've just now come from thy young Caius;
We've almost quarrell'd; would you think it? Mind,
Licinia, what I say: that boy's the making
Of a man,—will not be kept on humble terms
With Fortune, but walk up to her, and challenge her
To smile, or frown her most.
Lici. It must content me,
His father is not such a one.
Cor. May be!
Lici. Ay, but I'm sure of it!
[*Sits down to her embroidery.*
Livia. Good day, Licinia!
Cornelia, health be with you!
Lici. Must you go?
You have not told me yet the morning's news.
Livia. Indeed I've heard none, save that Vettius,
They say, is to be banish'd, which no doubt
You know already.
Lici. Not a word of it.
What is the time of day?
Livia. 'Tis the third hour,
And past. Good day again. [*Goes out.*
Cor. Good day, my Livia!
Why, my Licinia, what's the matter with you?
You've suffer'd Livia to depart, without
Saying good-bye to her.
Lici. 'Tis past the time
Caius should have been back, almost an hour.
Cor. Well, what and if it is? Go on with your work,
And wile the time away; the sooner he'll
Be with you.
[*Advancing towards her, and looking over her shoulder.*
Why you've done that rose to the life.
A musk-rose, is it not? 'Tis every thing
Except the scent, and that almost I think

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I can perceive with looking on't. Indeed,
You are a skilful needle!
Lici. Do you think
Caius hath aught to do with Vettius' trial?
Cor. Think what is passing on Olympus! One way
Or the other, what concerns it us? Men have
Their proper business, which no part it is
Of ours to help to manage. Why, that thread's
A crimson one you're taking to the leaf!
Lici. [*Rising.*] Cornelia! mother! do you know anything
About Caius? I'm sure you do: you praise
My work when I discourse of him;—when I ask you
Concerning him, your answer but puts off
The proper one, which, were it good to have,
Would you not give it me? I fear, I know
Not what. Oh, tell me what have I to fear;
Keep me not in the dark: a thing we see not
Stirring will startle us, which, when light comes,
We smile to find could do it.
Cor. Take your seat again.
And I'll sit down by you; and listen to me.
Lici. I thank you now, Cornelia!
Lici. Thank me by and by;
You should, but I doubt you will not. I know nothing
Of Caius' measures.
Lici. Measures!—Hath he measures?
Cor. Hath he hands and feet?—Hath he brains and heart?—Is he
A man?—What do you take him for?—Have men
No parts to play but lovers?—What! are they
Not citizens as well?—Have they not crafts,
Callings, professions?—Women act their parts,
When they do make their order'd houses know them:
Men must be busy out of doors—must stir
The city; yea, make the great world aware
That they are in it;—for the mastery
Of which they race, and wrestle, and such feats
Perform, the very skies, in wonderment,
Echoing back earth's acclaim, cry out of them!

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Enter LICINIUS.

What want you with me, my Licinius? [*Rising and taking him aside.*] You
Have come to tell me something: Caius hath spoken
For Vettius; I was certain he would do it.
He has enter'd the lists,—he has stripp'd for the course! I know
He will not get fair play, no more than his brother.
These fears are not good omens, my Licinius;
But let him run it nobly!

Lic. Nobly he
Hath started: Vettius is acquitted.

Cor. So far
All's well. Away! Hurry him home to us,—
The sooner here the better!

Lici. [*Rising.*] Stay, Licinius!

Cor. I'll tell you all, Licinia; let him go.
Caius hath spoken in the forum for [LICINIUS *goes out.*
His brother's friend, and they've acquitted him.

Lici. [*Bursting into tears.*] An hour ago I was the happiest wife
In Rome!

Cor. Licinia, if you are Caius' wife,
I am his mother. Is he not dear to me,—
My youngest son, and last? Yet do I bear
What I do know must come. I know my son:
Know thou thy husband—know thou Caius Gracchus.
He loves his mother well—Licinia better,—
His country best! As I, his mother, grudge not
That he prefers thee, thou, his wife, repine not
That he prefers his country. Both of us
Make up our minds to all may follow.

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. My master's coming, Cornelia, attended by a crowd of citizens, who rend the air with shouts. They say he has procured the acquittal of the noble Vettius. —Rome is all joy and exultation.

Cor. Run to the door, and wait upon thy master.
[LUCIUS *goes out.*
Hear you, Licinia? Away with these sad looks;

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Damp not thy husband's triumph! Can you hear
The people's shouts, and not partake their joy?
Lici. I can remember, when Tiberius fell,
Not one of all of them had voice enough
To bid his murderers stop.
Cor. 'Tis well, Licinia.
Had he not fallen in a generous cause,
I should have thought of that as well as you.
[*Shouts without.*

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, LUCIUS, *and* Attendants.

My son—my Caius! give you joy!—You've saved
The life of your brother's friend!
Caius. Licinia knows it?
Cor. She does; go to her.
Caius. She has more to learn.
Scarce had I left the forum, when a message
From the consul follow'd, giving me the post
Of Questor, and requiring me on the instant
To join Opimius. [LUCIUS *and* Attendants *go out.*
Cor. What! and must you leave us?
I did not look for this. At once, my Caius?
Well, son, I'm ready;—go, prepare thy wife.
Caius. What, my Licinia! don't you speak to Caius?
Lici. You never said a word of it to me!

Re-enter LICINIUS.

Lic. Come, Caius, are you ready?
Lici. Ready for what?
Caius. To take a ride, wife, and a long one, too.
Lic. The general waits.

Re-enter LUCIUS *and* Attendants, *bearing* CAIUS' *helmet, sword, and cloak.*

Lici. The general waits!—What general?
Where are you going, Caius?—Oh, ye gods!
What's to become of me?—Tell me the worst!
Caius. Love, I'm appointed Questor to Opimius;
And but a moment have for the farewells
Would take a day to speak, and many still
Left over. Wife! Licinia! if you love me——

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Lici. If I love you!
Cor. Ay, Licinia, if you love him.
Wouldst have thy husband be the lowest man
In Rome? Thou knowest none may hope to gain
The honours of the state, who have not shown
Their prowess in the field. A Roman wife
Is married to her husband's glory, not
His ease and pleasure. Come, take leave of him.
Lici. I'll see you to your horse.
Cor. What, with that face?
Lici. Will you not see your boy before you go?
Caius. I saw him, sweet, as I came in.
Lici. Well, Caius,
Farewell!
Caius. Now, that's my own Licinia!
I'll send you letters, love, day after day.
Now, that's my own brave girl, to give me a smile!
'Tis like a sunny morning to a traveller
At setting out—fills him with happiest omens.
Farewell!
Lici. I'll see you to the door.
Caius. So do.
Keep up your heart, love; I can come to you,
You know, at a day's calling—think of that;
Or you can come to me;—and you will write
Me letters, won't you?—Every word of which
I'll kiss, and think it is the hand that traced them!
There, now;—and, love, remember, as I shall,
Sad parting makes sweet meeting. Now, my Licinia!
[*They go out.*

END OF ACT I.

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ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter FANNIUS.

Fan. The gods provide for him! Fame talks of him.
As of a theme she could emblazon the more,
The more she should dilate on't. Enemies
Contend with friends which shall outdo the other
In vaunting of him. Yea, the hands that hate him
Supply him but with richest kindnesses;
The bane they'd give him turning into good.
This Questorship, for his undoing meant,
Has built him up a thousand times the man
He was before; that scarce a day can pass,
But something's added, to swell up the amount
Of his too prosperous fortunes.

Enter FLAMINIUS.

Fla. Health to Fannius!
Opimius is arrived.
Fan. I am glad of it.
Fla. Something to temper joy—would you believe it?
Gracchus is now in Rome, or soon to be.
Fan. Ha! it was that which brought Licinius to
His house! I saw him enter it just now.
Fla. What think you?
Fan. That, if he returns to Rome,
Rome's at his feet.
Fla. Come to the senate; something
Must be resolved upon to hurt his credit,
And slake the people's joy at seeing him.
Fan. Effect but that, thou art a god to Rome!

[*They go out.*

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SCENE II.—*Caius Gracchus' House.*

CORNELIA, LICINIA, *and* LICINIUS, *discovered*—LICINIA *seated at a table.*

Cor. Are not you pleased at this, Licinia!
Lici. No;
Nor pleased, yet nor displeased, Cornelia.
What care I, that the world allows him good
And wise? Did I not know him so before?
Had I a doubt of it?—Whom did I ask
To give their oath of it?—I was content
With mine own knowledge. Why should I be glad
That all do praise him?—For his sake?—Alas!
For any cause but that! Whom all do praise,
Hath but a thousand eyes for one bent on him
Can lower, as well as smile. I did not wed
Thy son, as one would choose an idle gem,
To other's eyes to sparkle; but because
He shone to mine.
Cor. Hear her!—Go on, Licinius.
Lic. His very fame more profit brings to Rome,
Than the exploits themselves of other men.
His fair renown has charmed Micipsa so,
That he has sent large store of corn to the army;
And his ambassadors have made it known
To the senate, in full assembly, that their master
Perform'd this from his mere respect for Caius.
Cor. Oh, glorious boy! surpass thy mother's hopes!
What said the senate?—Were they not struck with this?
Did they not own the virtue of my son,
And praise the name of Gracchus?
Lic. They!—Alas!
Their proud blood bows to aught but virtue. No;
The ambassadors were spurn'd,—driven out with shame,—
Sent back with scorn, as mere barbarians, who,
By showing their just preference of your son,
Slighted the senate of its due respect.
Lici. Unhappy Caius! thy conspicuous virtue
But marks thee out the victim of the senate!

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Cor. It marks him out the favourite of the gods!
Think'st thou I rear'd my son to follow virtue
Only for men's acclaim? It ill had fitted
The child of Scipio, and had never made me
The mother of the Gracchi! [*Aside to* LICINIUS] Say, Licinius,
Knows Caius this?

Lic. [*Aside to* CORNELIA.] He does, from many hands.
His friends are strong. The senate cannot hide
His worth from Rome. The people think of Caius
As their sole hope; and should he stand for tribune,
He must obtain the office.

Cor. What! and will
He stand for tribune? Wherefore do I ask?
Do I not know he will? [*Shouts without.*

Lici. What means that shout?

Lic. Forgive me, sister, that I have conceal'd
The measures of his friends, who have advised him
To show himself at once in Rome. No doubt
'Tis Caius, and the people welcome him.

Lici. 'Tis Caius!—Hear I right?—'Tis he, my Caius!

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS *and* POMPONIUS.

Caius. My soul, we meet again!—My honour'd mother!

Cor. The mother is honour'd in her son, my Caius.

Caius. Licinius—friend and brother! I received
Your letters, and I thank you for your care.
Licinia, thank the gods! we meet again.
How is our boy, love?—How art thou thyself?
Let me look at thee: well, as my heart could wish!
Great Jove! to look on such a precious thing,
And call it mine! You may smile, Marcus, but
There's such a thing as loving one's wife. Licinia,
Am I not with thee again? Let him who thinks
The world is worth his home, exchange home for it:
A little time, he'll find he has lost a world,
Not found one.

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Caius, a messenger
From the senate.

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Caius. Admit him. [LUCIUS *goes out.*
Mother, you'll give me leave;—Licinia,
I've many things to tell thee. Count these gems, love;
They were a gift to me for thee, from hands
Do only know thee from thy husband's tongue,
Ne'er yet could speak the moiety of thy worth.
Go with my mother, sweet! I have neglected
Some matters of high duty, just to snatch
This look of thee, and those must now be done,
Ere I can banquet longer.

Lici. Caius, you'll
Be with us soon?

Caius. That soon's a feat of time,
With shortest flight and swiftest expectation
It cannot now perform. Our haste shall own
No stop can be push'd by.

Lici. Remember, now! [CORNELIA *and* LICINIA *go out.*

Caius. Now for the senate!

Enter a Lictor.

Lictor. The senate, Caius, cites you to appear
Before the censors.

Caius. Well!—Acquaint the senate
I shall obey. [Lictor *goes out.*

Pom. 'Twas rumour'd, ere you came,
Opimius had return'd; on which account
The senate had been suddenly convoked.

Caius. I did expect as much. Let me think—let me think!
Nothing done rashly, nor yet timidly,
The mean's discretion, back'd by sedate resolve.
I cannot do it!—My blood's a point too warm!
To hear a man deal out morality,
Axiom upon axiom—for an hour dilate
Upon the value of an aphorism,—
Amplify to o'errunning in the cause,
And then, at every allegation,
Invoke no less a witness than high Jove
Himself, and know him all the while to play
The knave,—great Hercules! it sets my veins
A boiling!

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Lic. Caius, you would need a rein
More firmly ruled than this.
Caius. I know it—I know it,
As well as you. Hang them! I'll try and play
The cautious man for once. 'Tis time to choose
New tribunes, is it not?
Pom. It is.
Caius. You see
I cannot be at home an hour, but they
Let loose the dogs upon me. Come! to the censors!
Now will you see them hold their hands to the gods!
Behold my brother's blood upon those hands,—
Yea, dripping from them, which was wiped as cool
As it was water! They believed I had
Forgot Tiberius' death; ay, while I heard
The Tiber talk of it in every murmur
Of its uneasy tide!
Lic. How do you mean
To act?—Your plans?
Caius. How do I mean to act!
My plans! Come with me to the Campus Martius.
[*They go out.*

SCENE III.—*The Campus Martius—the Portico of the Temple of Mars, under which the chairs for the Censors are placed.*

Enter TITUS *and* MARCUS.

Tit. So, Caius is returned from the army?
Mar. Ay; there's not an honest man in Rome but's glad of it.
Tit. Why gather the people to the Campus Martius?
Mar. Here are two senators' gentlemen will inform you.

Enter SEXTUS *and* QUINTUS.

Tit. Health to you, master!
Sex. Health to you, master!
Tit. Can you tell us why the people gather this way?
Sex. For the old reason, friend: we are all good till we're tried.

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Tit. Ay, indeed! What honest man has turned rogue to day?

Sex. Many a one, I doubt; but chiefly he whom our good citizens believe the honestest in Rome.

Mar. Mean you your master, friend?

Sex. No; I mean the master of the people; the gentleman who feels for their empty stomachs, and gives them words to eat; your Caius Gracchus, who calls our tradesmen the nobility of Rome; and so indeed they are, if rags can make them so.

Mar. No bad evidence! You cannot wear the wool, without shearing the sheep. But, pray, what's the matter with Caius Gracchus?

Sex. Only that he has returned from the army without his general's leave—nothing more, except a whisper or two about the tumult at Fregella. 'Tis said he had a hand in it.

Mar. What's your opinion?

Sex. Believe me, it does not favour him.

Tit. What! you like the fare that the patricians give?

Sex. What fare?

Tit. A good dinner. Caius, you say, feeds the people upon words. A very natural preference! There's not a dog or an ass in Rome that would not be of your mind.

Sex. [*Raising his staff.*] Pray which of the two may you be, friend?

Mar. Why ask you?

Sex. Oh! merely that, upon occasion, I may know whether I ought to take my foot or my staff to you. No offence, I hope. I have all the respect in the world for you, believe me.

Tit. [*To* MARCUS.] You have the worst of it. Let me take him in hand. [*To* SEXTUS.] Hark you, master; a word with you.

Sex. Your pleasure, master?

Tit. How comes your cloak to have that gloss upon it?

Sex. Not by partaking of your grease, friend.

Tit. My grease! Why, man, there's as much fat in

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a tanned hide as in all my body! The patricians have sweated me to very leanness, and left me nothing to recruit withal, but hunger and nakedness.

Sex. They are right. They find that their cattle grow restive with abundance of provender.

Tit. But they feed their curs, friend.

Sex. Whom do you call a cur?

Tit. Down with your staff, master, for I have another that may ruffle the gloss of your cloak for you. What! has any thing surprised you? Do you wonder that the order which wins your battles in the field, should refuse your blows in the city? You despise us when you have no need of us; but, if an ounce of power or peculation is to be gained through our means, oh! then you put on your sweet looks, and, bowing to the very belts of our greasy jackets, you exclaim, "Fair gentlemen!—kind fellow-citizens!—loving comrades!—sweet, worthy, gentle Romans!—grant us your voices!" Or, if the enemy is to be opposed, oh! then we are "men of mettle!—(poor starved devils!)—the defenders of our country!"—(that is, your cattle as you call us)—and so indeed we are. We bear your patricians on our backs to victory; we carry them proudly through the ranks of the barbarians! They come off safe—we get the knocks, the pricks, and the scratches. They obtain crowns and triumphs—we cannot obtain—a dinner! They get their actions recorded—we get ours forgotten! They receive new names and titles—we return to our old ones with which you honour us—"the rabble!—the herd!—the cattle!—the vermin!—the scum of Rome!"

Sex. Pray, friend, will you look at this staff of mine?

Tit. I look at it, friend.

Sex. Is it not a staff, friend?

Tit. Yes, if a staff is a staff, friend.

Sex. If I am weary, it enables me to rest myself; if I am lame, it helps me to walk; if I quarrel, it knocks down my adversary; and yet, is it not always a staff, friend?

Mar. [*To* TITUS.] You have the worst of it. Let me attack him. Hark you, master. Does your staff ever knock its owner on the pate?

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Sex. What do you mean?

Mar. [*Striking him.*] Why thus.

Sex. Do you want to quarrel?

Mar. Oh, by no means. I only wanted to show you the difference between a staff and a man, friend.

Tit. Turn on him again. I'll second you, and here is a troop of friends at hand.

Qui. Bear with him no longer. Hither comes a band of our comrades. I'll beckon them to make haste. [*Calling off.*] Come on, come on! These greasy citizens are uttering treason against our masters, the noble patricians.

Enter Servants.

Mar. Hem!—Shall we go over the argument again, master? Is there anything else your staff can do?

Sext. Yes; when I carry it heedlessly, it sometimes chances to—trip. [*Trips* MARCUS.

Tit. Help, help, there!

Enter Citizens. — *Confused cry of* "Down with the Citizens!" "Down with the Slaves and Servants!"— *They are about to attack each other, when* FLAMINIUS's *voice without stops them.*

Enter FLAMINIUS, TUDITANUS, OPIMIUS, *Senators, two* Censors, *and twelve Lictors.*

Fla. Hold! hold! I charge you, you rash citizens!
What means this tumult? How! is peace so old
That you are weary of it? Who began
This fray?

Sex. That caitiff yonder.

Tit. Our old names!

Mar. 'Twas that patrician's hireling that began it.

CAIUS GRACCHUS *and his Friends,* POMPONIUS *and* LICINIUS, *appear behind.*

Opi. Silence! ye wrangling discontented men!
Ye pest of Rome! What stirs you to this brawl?
I know your cue. Your Gracchus has return'd,
And ye the signal give of discontent,
Conspiracy, and foul rebellion!
A noble leader for your noble party!

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A glorious soldier, that returns him home
Without his general's leave! A worthy son
Of Rome, that tampers with her enemies,
And instigates her allies to revolt!
An honest patriot——

[*Seeing* CAIUS GRACCHUS *close to him, he checks himself.*

Caius. Proceed, Opimius!
Now is your proper time to speak. I am here—
Gracchus is here! Gracchus, that draws not on
A man behind his back!

[OPIMIUS *is confused—he walks sullenly to the place appointed for him, as the accuser of* CAIUS GRACCHUS—GRACCHUS *fixes his eyes steadfastly upon* OPIMIUS, *who betrays considerable embarrassment.*

Opi. [*Recovering.*] This lofty bearing
Befits the man could quit his post without
His general's leave, and use the sacred power
His office gave him, to pervert the faith
His duty 'twas to guard; as amply can
Fregella testify.

Caius. Is this your charge?
Censors! I'll save your labour. It appears
I am cited here, because I have return'd
Without my general's leave, and for the crime
Of having raised the tumult at Fregella.
First, with the first. I have remain'd my time;
Nay, I have overserved it by the laws—
The laws which Caius Gracchus dares not break.
But, censors, let that pass. I will propose
A better question for your satisfaction:
"How have I served my time?" I'll answer that:—
"How have I served my time?"—"For mine own gain,
Or that of the republic?" What was my office?
Questor. What was its nature? Lucrative;
So lucrative, that all my predecessors,
Who went forth poor, return'd home rich—so rich,
Their very wine vessels resign'd their store
Of fluid wealth, only for wealthier freight
Of solid gold. I went forth, poor enough;

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But have return'd still poorer than I went.
Then, for my conduct as a soldier,
I do not blush to say, I have prevail'd
By mercy more than vengeance. I have won
From enemies their hearts, before their arms;
And held the tributary states to Rome,
By friendship more than fear. I have answer'd that.
First Censor. If you have served your time, and faithfully
Discharged your duty, as a Roman Questor,
So far you are acquitted.
Opi. To the next, then—
The tumult at Fregella.
Caius. Ay, to that!
Produce your proofs!
Opi. I charge you, as your general.
Caius. Your proofs—your evidence—your witnesses.
Opi. Is it from thee I hear this haughty challenge?
Who best should know thy actions? Wast thou not
Mine officer? I charge thee with the treason.
Before the gods, I charge thee with it, Caius;
I say, I charge thee as thy general.
Caius. Thou daring noble! Is it to the face
Of these upright authorities, thou claim'st
To be at once the witness and accuser?
Say, censors, is it fit? Is it the law?
First Censor. The law permits it not. The accusation
And proof, in such a case, cannot exist
In the same person. Caius Gracchus, therefore,
Is free, unless you can find other cause
For his detention. [*The* Censors *rise.*
Opi. Censors, it is fit
You look to the public safety. If our criminals
Escape your penalties, your prisons and
Your chains will soon be our inheritance.
Caius. Have the laws lost their reverence?
Fla. The charge
Is heavy.
Caius. Heavy as the proofs are light.
Ye citizens of Rome, behold what favour
Your masters show your brethren! I have borne

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My country's arms with honour; overserved
My time; return'd in poverty, that might
Have amass'd treasures; and they thus reward me—
Prefer a charge against me without proof,
Direct or indirect—without a testimony,
Weighty or light—without an argument,
Idle or plausible—without as much
Of feasibility, as would suffice
To feed suspicion's phantom! Why is this?
How have I bought this hatred? When my brother,
Tiberius Gracchus, fell beneath their blows,
I call'd them not assassins! When his friends
Fell sacrifices to their after-vengeance,
I did not style them butchers! When their hatred
Drove the Numidian nobles from the senate,
With scoffs and execrations, that they praised me,
And to my cause assign'd the royal bounty
Of King Micipsa, still I did not name them,
The proud, invidious, insolent patricians!

Opi. Hear ye!

Caius. Ye men of Rome, there is no favour
For justice!—grudgingly her dues are granted.
Your great men boast no more the love of country;
They count their talents—measure their domains—
Number their slaves—make lists of knights and clients—
Enlarge their palaces—dress forth their banquets,
Awake their lyres and timbrels, and with their floods
Of ripe Falernian, drown the little left
Of virtue!

Opi. He would raise a tumult!

Caius. No.
This hand's the first to arm against the man,
Whoe'er he be, that favours civil discord.
I have no gust for blood, Opimius;
I sacrifice to justice and to mercy!

Opi. He has aspersed the justice of our order;
He flatters the plebeians, and should be
Attach'd and brought to question for this conduct.

Caius. Romans, I ask the office of your tribune!

Mar. Ay! you shall have it! Gracchus shall be tribune!

Tit. Gracchus tribune! Caius Gracchus tribune!

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Opi. Stay, friends! Take heed! Beware of flatterers!
Caius. The laws! the laws! Of common right, the hold!
The wealth, the happiness, the freedom of
The nation! Who has hidden them—defaced them—
Sold them—corrupted them from the pure letter?
Why do they guard the rich man's cloak from a rent,
And tear the poor man's garment from his back?
Why are they, in the proud man's grasp, a sword,
And in the hand of the humble man, a reed?
The laws! the laws! I ask you for the laws!
Demand them in my country's sacred name!
Still silent? Reckless still of my appeal?
Romans! I ask the office of your tribune!
[CAIUS GRACCHUS *and his party go out, followed by Citizens, shouting.*
Opi. Stop him from rising, or our order falls!
[OPIMIUS, *and the rest, go out.*

SCENE IV.—*A Street—a Gate of the City.*

Enter TITUS *and* MARCUS *with Citizens.*

Tit. The work goes nobly on! Caius is sure to be tribune. This is a happy day for Rome!

Mar. Ay, the people will have their rights. We shall know ourselves now, masters. See! hither comes a crowd of voters; let us speak to them.

Enter Voters.

Health to you, masters! Are you going to vote?

First Voter. Yes; if we can find an honest candidate.

Mar. Here's one ready to your hands, masters; Caius Gracchus. Choose him, and you'll do good service to your country. He'll see that you shall have your rights, nor will the patricians dare to stop their noses when they pass us, as if we were so much carrion. Look you, masters, Caius is a friend of the plebeians; he respects our order, and so he ought; and, therefore, let every good citizen support him. Away, my friends! Vote, and cry, Caius!

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Voters. Caius Gracchus! Huzza! [*They go out.*

Mar. He's sure of the election. The patricians will eat poor suppers to-night.

Enter Voters.

Save you, masters; are you going to vote for the right candidate?

First Voter. Do you think we'd vote for the wrong one?

Tit. Then you'll vote for Caius Gracchus?

First Voter. No—I don't like him. They say he'll bring the state into danger. We are men that love peace and concord.

Tit. Ay, and good feeding. Hark you, master; take these cattle to the stalls of the patricians. The patricians make profitable masters. They give stripes only now and then; but that's nothing, you know, to a kindly beast. Away, I say!—to the stalls with them! [*They go out severally.*

Enter LICINIA *and* CORNELIA.

Cor. Caius, you see, is nowhere to be found.
Let us go home again.

Lici. Not till I see him.
Livia was right; he'll surely stand for tribune.
Let's seek him in the forum.

Cor. Are you mad?
Go to the forum after him! All Rome
Would talk of it. When did you know a wife
Follow her husband to the forum? Why
'Twould set all fingers pointing; and they'd say,
"Caius did well to take a wife to school him."
I'd rather lose a husband, than have people
So talk of mine.

Lici. You wish him to be tribune?

Cor. Licinia, no; I wish him not, my daughter;
But I do know, that if he will be tribune,
He will; and, knowing that, the unwelcome thought
Must be my guest. I'd entertain with grace
For mine own dignity, and his contentment,
Which should not profitless be marr'd. [*Shouts without.*

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My child,
Why do you grasp me by the arm and tremble?
The people shout for joy.

Lici. It is a kind
Of joy that's fearful to my mind. A breeze
So airy, give it but a little more
Of breath, becomes a storm, and makes a wreck
Of the poor laughing vessel.

Enter LICINIUS.

Oh, my Marcus!
Know you where Caius is? Think you he means
To stand for tribune? Have you come from him,
Or go you to him? Tell me everything;
And ask me what you may, you will not set me
A task so hard I will not do it, Marcus.

[CORNELIA *signs to* LICINIUS.

Lic. Sister, his own house is the likeliest place
To find him in. I parted with him at
The Campus Martius. He may be at home;
Go seek him there, and if he be not come,
Wait for him. I, meanwhile, will look for him,
To bring him to you.

Lici. Will you now, my Marcus?
Then we'll go home, Cornelia. Mind your promise;
Search for him in the forum. If you meet
With any friend of his, inquire of him;
And if you find him, say I sent you for him;
And, brother, do not quit him till he comes.
Say, I have something to impart to him;
Matter of moment—cannot be put off—
That he expected not—that's just fallen out.
Go! and be sure you bring him to me, Marcus.

Cor. Haste you before, child. I've a word to say
To Marcus.

Lici. Well, if you deceive me now!
I'll trust you. [*Goes out.*

Cor. In a word, what has he done?

Lic. Defeated the patricians, and proposed
Himself for tribune.

Cor. It would come to this!

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I knew that it would come to this, Licinius!
And I could tell what further it will come to,
If I would. No matter. Two such sons as mine
Were never made for mothers that have eyes
Which are afraid of tears, that come to me
As old acquaintance. I did rear my boys
Companions for the gods. Why wonder I
If they will go to them ere other men?
Many a time, when they stood before me,
Such things as mothers seldom look upon,
And I have seem'd to feed on them with mine eyes,
My thoughts have ponder'd o'er their bier, where they
Lay stiff and cold! I would not see them so
If I could help it; but I would not help it
To see them otherwise, and other men.
My Caius must be tribune!

[*Shouts several times, approaching nearer.*

Lic. And he is so;
Those shouts proclaim it. [*Looking off.*] See, Cornelia,
He comes! Behold! look how they hem him round!
Why do you turn away?

Cor. I turn away
To see that flush of triumph on his cheek
Which lights it up as he did feel a god;
And think how I may after see that cheek,
And think upon that flush. Licinia's well
Away; it had o'ercome her quite. Come, Marcus.

[CORNELIA *and* LICINIUS *retire.*

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, DRUSUS, POMPONIUS, TITUS, MARCUS, *and Citizens, shouting.*

Caius. No more, my friends! no more of this I pray you!
Disperse to your several homes. Why do you give
These honours to your servant?

Tit. Suffer us
To see you to your house.

Mar. Yes, Caius, yes.
We'll hail your honour'd mother and your wife.

Pom. Indulge the people, Gracchus.

Caius. Well, my friends,

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If you will go with me—[*Seeing* CORNELIA.] My
honour'd mother!

Cor. May the great gods, who crown'd thee with
Instruct thee so to use it, as to bless [this triumph,
Thy country! With a firm and mighty hand,
Mayst thou uphold the laws, and keep them ever
Above the proud man's violence, and within
The poor man's reach; so shall thy mother—Rome—
Acknowledge thee her son, and teach thy name
To the applauding tongues of after ages!
Who is your brother tribune?

Caius. Worthy Drusus.

Cor. [*To* DRUSUS.] My son is happy in his col-
league, sir,
And, let me trust, will not dishonour him.

Dru. My honour is to second him, Cornelia.

Caius. Come, mother. [*Retires up with* DRUSUS.

Re-enter LICINIA.

Lic. Ha! Licinia!

Cor. [*Going up to her.*] My Licinia!
For Caius' honour, act like Caius' wife:
He's tribune.

Lici. Tribune!

Cor. Think what eyes are on you!
You are the mother of a Roman, too;
Summon your spirits! That's my daughter! Come
Up to him now at once, and wish him joy.

Lici. [*Crossing to* CAIUS.] Caius, I give you——

Caius. My Licinia!

Lici. I give you——

Caius. Come! her heart doth overtask
Her tongue!

Lici. Joy, Caius! I do give you joy!
[*She faints on his arm, and the curtain drops.*

END OF ACT II.

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ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter FLAMINIUS *and* OPIMIUS.

Opi. Saw you, Flaminius, how they look'd at us?
That was defiance. I could read the name
Of Gracchus on those daring brows of theirs.
Behoves us now a meek look, where, before,
We'd give a scowl: the people are our masters.
That Rome should ever see it!

Fla. We must bear it.

Opi. Ay, while our blood boils! We must smile, Flaminius,
And, at the same time, grind our teeth, if so
It pleaseth Gracchus. Gods! that a man I could take
By the throat and smite—yea, set my foot upon
For perfect loathing,—whom I should think it righteous
To slay in a temple—ay, by Hercules!
At the altar of a temple,—that a man
Like that should order me, and do it too
By vilest instrument! It is a task
For patience!

Fla. Never king was absolute
In Rome as he; his will is law. Popilius
Can witness that, self-banish'd to escape
A heavier doom. The senate hath he lopp'd
Of half its power, with his three hundred knights
Whom he has named assistants to it, with
Equality of voices. Not a day
Passes, but some new edict weakens those
That should be strong, and makes them strong 'twere best
Were weak. And then his state! He never moves
But in a crowd of knights, ambassadors,
Soldiers, and magistrates, artificers,
And men of letters, that attend on him.
There's not a man in Rome but Caius Gracchus.

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Opi. What would you say of him would rid Rome of him?
Fla. I'd say he was a worthy son of Rome.
Opi. Flaminius, I'll effect it!
Fla. By what means?
Opi. Have you e'er noted Drusus much?
Fla. His colleague?
Opi. The same.
Fla. A quiet, simple, honest man,
Who follows Gracchus with a modest zeal,
And rather seems, from an unaiming spirit,
To second his designs, than help them on
Through principle.
Opi. You have described him well,
As he appears; I know him as he is.
'Tis opportunity that proves a man;
And, trust me, Livius Drusus is not one,
That, having power, lacks will to overtop
His fellow. I will use this Livius Drusus,
To combat Gracchus, with the very means
That make him to be fear'd. Have patience, and
You'll see my policy. They're coming to
The forum—Drusus last. This shows me my
Exordium.

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, *preceded by a Lictor*, LICINIUS, POMPONIUS, FLACCUS, FULVIUS, TITUS, MARCUS, *twelve Citizens, and* DRUSUS *last.*

Caius. Health to Flaminius!
Fla. Health to Caius!
Opi. What business is to-day before the commons?
Caius. Some colonies we think to send from Rome,
To the late conquer'd cities. Does Opimius
Approve the measure?
Opi. Gracchus asks the question,
As though he thought Opimius did not love
The people's good. 'Twere happy for the people,
If they, who flatter them, loved it as well.
Caius. Whom does Opimius call the people's flatterer?
Opi. The man would feed the people's vanity,
By making them aspire above themselves.

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Caius. Opimius, then, is not their flatterer;
He'd make the people look below themselves,
How would he rate them? As we rate our herds.
How would he use them? As we use our herds.
Oh! may the people ever have such flatterers
As guard them from the kindness of such friends!

[CAIUS GRACCHUS *and his party go out.*—DRUSUS *is following him, when* OPIMIUS, *with affected surprise, stops him.*

Opi. Why, Livius Drusus, is it you? I thought
You were not come abroad to-day. No wonder:
You're not the man, methinks, it suits to close
The train attends upon your colleague there.
Ah, Drusus! if the Romans knew their friends,
They would not follow Gracchus thus, and leave
His betters at their heels!

Dru. I do not court
Their favour, good Opimius. It contents me
To know that I discharge, with honesty,
The duty of their tribune.

Opi. Livius Drusus,
There's not a man in Rome but, if he speaks
The truth, will say, you do. I'll swear it for one,
At any time. Were you not hurried now,
I'd tell you something, Drusus, that would show you
What men think of you; but, as 'tis, I'll keep it
Till you can hear it. Yet this, before I leave you:
Drusus, I would I were a friend of yours,
To do you a friend's office. Give me your hand.
I like you, Drusus, you're an honest tribune.
I say, I like you; and did I not say it
Behind your back, I would not to your face.
Farewell! Perhaps you're not so call'd for, neither,
But you could spare a moment?

Dru. If it be
Your pleasure——

Opi. Thank you, Drusus, thank you! This
Is very kind of you. You know Flaminius?

Dru. I know his fair report.

Opi. You know him well, then;

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But know him better. Take him by the hand.
[FLAMINIUS *crosses to* DRUSUS, *and takes his hand.*
He wants to know you more than by report.
Dru. I would I knew how to deserve this honour.
Opi. I would you knew what honour you deserve.
There are men, Drusus, wear their worth so modestly,
They do not seem to know they have it. You,
I see, are one of these, and grieve to see it;
For such the mass account as common men—
As gold which is not coin'd, the unskill'd eye
Will take for brass. Drusus, it makes me mad
To see the sterling'st ore thrown by, and that
Is basest hoarded only for the stamp
Which the other only wants! I wish I had
The coining of you, Drusus!
Dru. You would find
You overweigh'd me.
Opi. Not a grain, by Jupiter!
Or never weigh'd I yet an honest man.
And here's to try it. Would you, Drusus, dare
Achieve the thing you could and should?
Dru. I were not
A man else.
Opi. Every one that knows you, Drusus,
Knows that you are a man; but are you such
A man?
Dru. I think I am.
Opi. I think so, too.
But, ever, what we most desire to be,
We fear may not be, though we know not why
We do so.—Drusus, I'll deal frankly with you;
I will not hesitate, nor wind about,
Nor speak by halves, as if I fear'd to let
My thoughts go from me. Listen to me, then.
Rome is in danger—discord reigns in her;
Her orders are opposed among themselves,
The people hate the senate, call us proud,
Cruel, luxurious, avaricious; masters,
Oppressors, tyrants—men, alas! my Drusus,
That are not masters even of their own.
The cause of this is Caius Gracchus. He,

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For his own aims, lets no occasion pass
To inflame the commons; wherefore, he revives
Old grievances, or fancies present, or
Predicts to come; and should this cause go on
Without obstruction, Rome will grieve to see
The end. The senate, justly fearing this,
Have much debated on the remedy;
And all at length agree there is but one,
Namely, to find a man that's fit to mediate
Between them and the people. Drusus, thou
Art he!

Dru. Alas! what weight have I, Opimius,
To bear against the weight of Caius Gracchus?

Opi. What weight hast thou! Thou good and honest man!
Now, by the gods, I love thee, Drusus, for
Thy true simplicity! What weight hast thou!
Why, hast thou not the weight of Caius Gracchus?
You share one office—the same cares divide,
The same responsibilities; why not
The same respect? Oh, Livius Drusus! Caius
Were not content did Drusus lead the people,
And Gracchus humbly follow at their heels!
But let that pass. Deal frankly with a friend.
What think you, Drusus? Do the senate hate
The people?

Dru. Nay, I would believe they did not.

Opi. I know you would; I think you do; but much
I wonder that you do, because 'tis not
The fashion. Drusus, do you think
I'll shuffle with you? Do not answer me.
I am sure you do not. Take my word then, Drusus:
The senate love the people. Ay, I know
'Tis easily said, but I will prove it to you.
Know, then, I have been deputed to solicit
Your friendship for the senate—not to oppose,
As once Octavius did the former Gracchus,
But to outdo your colleague in his plans
In favour of the people, still proposing
Some law for their additional advantage;
And only stating—as in simple fairness

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You should—that so the senate had express'd
Their wishes—nothing farther. By this means,
The people will be served; the senate placed
Again in confidence; your rival stripp'd
Of dangerous influence; yourself exalted,
According to your worth; and, to sum up
The whole at once, your country saved from ruin.
Fla. You cannot hesitate in such a cause.
Dru. I undertake the trust with sacred zeal;
And, if I can compose the present evils,
Shall deem myself most happy.
Opi. I am sure of it,
And shall with joy report this to the senate.
Meanwhile, be often with us. Let us know
Your wishes for the people; we'll promote them.
What you say should be, shall be, on your saying,
Or break at once with us. The tribes shall know
What 'tis to have a tribune of repute,
Who does not use his office to promote
Cabal, and strife, and jealousy, and hate,
Like certain gentlemen.
To your work at once!
But, hark you, Livius Drusus; tell me truly,
Are you not over modest? Come! confess, now.
I know you are—I know, that, should the senate
Give you your choice of honours, you'd refuse
To challenge e'en the smallest. Well, no matter!
Such men live for their country. Heed not Gracchus,
If he upbraid you—if! Should the plebeians
Give but one shout for Drusus, he'll be sick
With all the gall of envy! Come to the senate
To-morrow. Be not strange with us, good Livius!
Mark him now! Heed him well, for he is wily,
And thou art simple in thine honesty.
You'll come to the senate, to-morrow? Eye him,
Drusus;
He's a rank traitor! Mind to-morrow, now.
So, farewell, honest Drusus! [DRUSUS *goes out.*
Fla. Nobly play'd!
Opi. Beyond my hopes. Let us inform our friends;
And as the choice of tribunes is at hand,

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Prevent his re-election. Come, despatch!
Flaminius, wait at once upon the senate.
[FLAMINIUS *goes out.*
I have felt thee, Caius! The nobility
Of thy commanding nature has opposed
And triumph'd o'er me. Thou shalt feel me now,
Yet through another! Rest, until I gain
The consulship, and thou no more art tribune
The weight of vengeance lies in the arm that sends it.
[*Shouts heard without.*
Ay, shout away! unmoved, I hear you now:
The snare is spread, and let the lion roar! [*Goes out.*

SCENE II.—*The Forum.*

CAIUS GRACCHUS *discovered in the Rostrum*—TITUS, MARCUS, *and* Citizens—*the people shout.*

Caius. No more, my friends! How often must I tell you,
You should not pay these honours to your tribune?

Tit. Long may you live, Caius!

Mar. Prosperously and long!
Hither comes honest Drusus. Shall we shout for him?

Tit. Why should we? Think you, he is any great friend to the people? Not he! Is he not a quiet, easy, contented man, who lets things take their course? Can such a man be a friend to the people? No, no; he is no friend to the people. He is well enough in his place, because he keeps a rogue out of it; and just says ay, and no, according to the will of Caius.

Mar. You say right. For my part, I never liked your peaceful, honest man. Give me a stirring fellow, that will brow-beat the nobles, and call the authorities to account; that's your only tribune.

Enter DRUSUS.

Caius. Drusus, I have waited for you, and I am glad you have come.

Mar. [*Apart to* TITUS.] Observe, he hasn't hurried himself. [*To the* Citizens.] Make way for Drusus!—

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[DRUSUS *ascends the steps of the rostrum.*] Make way there—let the good man pass! You may know by his gait that he loves high feeding, and sleeps one-half of the day, for having dozed away the other half.

Tit. Silence! Caius is going to speak. Cheer him, masters!

All. Huzza! Long live Caius!

Caius. Romans, here are some plans of new decrees
We mean to offer for your approbation.
I know not whether you will think them wise;
But this I know, the hand that drew them up,
Belongs to one would die to do you good.

Tit. Worthy Caius!

All. Long may you live, Caius!

Caius. With grief we see you bare of many goods,
That make life sweet. Your wretchedness afflicts
The heart of Caius. Thousands of brave men,
Wandering about the streets of Rome, without
Means, or employment to procure them! Now,
We here direct two colonies to be sent
To the late conquer'd cities.

Tit. Noble Caius!

Mar. Worthy Caius!

All. [*Shouting.*] Caius for ever.

Dru. My countrymen—

Mar. Drusus is going to speak. Now for an oration.

Dru. You need not learn I lack those noble parts,
Which make the orator you love to hear.
I have no merit but my honesty;
And 'tis my honesty that says to you,
I'd die with Caius for the good of Rome!

Tit. Yes, yes; Drusus is an honest, quiet, good sort of man. That everybody must say for him; but as for his speech, I'd make as good a one myself. Cheer him, masters—cheer him! [*The people cheer faintly.*

Dru. I do not ask you to applaud me, Romans;
I love your welfare better than your praise.

Mar. Come, come, that's very well, now; cheer for that, masters;—very well, indeed! Cheer! cheer! [*They cheer louder.*

Dru. I thank you, fellow-citizens. Don't mind me.

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Mar. Cheer him again, masters! [*A general cheer.*

Dru. Romans, I know my colleague's love for you;
And yet, methinks, he stints it in this measure.
Two colonies! What are two colonies?
Two handfuls! He should stretch this grant, and ease
The groaning and debilitated state!
Two handfuls of the people, to two cities!
Caius for once adopts half measures. I
Decree, that to each city there be sent
Three thousand of the poorest citizens—
Three thousand to each city.

Mar. Worthy Drusus! noble Drusus! Huzza!

All. Huzza!

Dru. Countrymen,
Pay me no thanks! Indeed, you owe me none;
I only speak the wishes of the senate.

Mar. The senate! May we cheer for the senate!

Tit. To be sure, if they do the people good.

Mar. Huzza for the senate, masters! huzza!

All. Huzza!

Caius. Indeed! The senate! For the people's sake,
We thank them for this favour. Worthy Romans,
Now our affairs put on a prosperous face,
The senate send you favours. We thank the senate!
But not this mighty kindness of the senate
Can set my cares at rest. I have made an estimate
Of certain waste uncultivated lands,
South of the Tiber. These—however, subject
To certain trifling services and rents—
We here allot to fifteen hundred families
From the plebeians of the lowest class.

Tit. Noble Caius! worthy Caius! Cheer, masters!

Mar. Stop! Drusus is going to speak. Hear what Drusus says.

Dru. Romans, my worthy colleague, whom I honour,
Seems not to love that you should owe the senate
Favour or justice.

Caius. Drusus!

Mar. Go on, Drusus! let him go on! Come, come, Drusus must have fair play.

All. Drusus! Drusus!

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Dru. If 'tis your pleasure, friends, to hear my colleague
Sooner than me, you only have to say it.

All. No! no! no! Go on! go on!

Dru. I care not who befriends you, worthy citizens;
The senate or the tribunes. The more friends
You have, the less you will have need of me.

Mar. Good, honest man, go on!

All. Go on! go on!

Dru. I say—and if I know the thing I say,
Am I not right in saying it? I say,
The senate wish the people to be happy,
And do not want to tax them. Noble Caius
Might have gone farther in this act of his,
And not displeased the senate; therefore, I,
Without regard to his decree, enact,
That certain waste, uncultivated lands,
Lying north of Rome, be forthwith parcell'd out
To fifteen hundred of the poorest families,
Free of all rent and service.

Mar. A noble decree, noble Drusus! The worthy senate! Huzza, for Drusus and the senate!

Dru. My friends, think not of Drusus; thank the senate.

Mar. Good, honest man! He is too modest to take the praise to himself; he gives it all to the senate. Observe Caius; he changes colour; he envies Drusus; he doesn't like the applause we give to Drusus. Applaud the good man again. Long live Drusus! Drusus and the senate for ever! Huzza!

All. Huzza!

Caius. May I be heard, my friends?

Tit. Speak, Gracchus, speak!

Mar. Drusus for ever!

Caius. Rome—Rome, my friends, for ever!
Whoe'er is good—whoe'er is just and great,
The honour be to Rome, our common mother!
I have warn'd you oft! Look to your liberties,—
Beware the senate's arts! beware her tools!

Dru. How! Caius—

Caius. Nay, good Livius Drusus!

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Mar. Not a word against Drusus!
All. No! no! no!
Mar. The senate has acted well in this.
All. It has! it has!
Caius. I am content; if you approve it, masters,
I am content. I cannot help my fears;
But let it pass. I'll say, I am content!
Masters, I never yet incurr'd your censure:
If I am over-watchful for your safety,
Guarding you 'gainst the chance of injury,—
If I suspect——But, since it pleases you,
I'll not suspect this kindness of the senate!
And yet it may be ask'd—when you were weak,
And needed friends, where was the senate's kindness?
Then you might help yourselves; now you are strong,
It holds its hundred hands to give you aid!
I think, 'twas not the kindness of the senate
Made it expedient, when my first decree
Declared the magistrate to be infamous,
Who was deposed by judgment of the people.
Or, when my next enacted, that the magistrate,
Who banish'd, without law, a citizen,
Should answer the assembly of the people.
Or, when, to give you plenitude of power,
I granted each inhabitant of Latium
The right of suffrage.
Tit. Hear him! hear him!
Mar. Silence! Drusus is going to speak.
Dru. Romans, I'll not pretend to say how much
You owe the senate; be it much, or little,
Or nothing. Only, as I think they love you,
I'll not speak ill of them. They have desired me
To show you favour; mark me—have desired me!
Should I be jealous of them? Words, my friends,
Are air; but actions are substantial things,
That warrant judgment. But we'll not debate
Their truth or falsehood. They appear to favour us,
And let us take advantage of their seeming.
My colleague, Caius, as he just now said,
Has given to the inhabitants of Latium
The right to vote—the right of citizens.

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Has not this act, then, made them citizens?
And yet, my friends, the Latin soldier feels
The scourge—he feels the scourge!—an infamy,
That never should approach the freeman's back!
We now decree, that it shall be unlawful,
Henceforth, for any captain of our legions
To beat with rods a soldier of that nation.

Mar. A noble decree!—Worthy Drusus!—A noble decree! Huzza!

Dru. My friends, I now depart; but, ere I leave you,
I must declare, that whatsoe'er I have done,
I have done with the approval of the senate.
[*Descends from the rostrum.*

Mar. We'll follow you home, Drusus! [GRACCHUS *hurries down the steps.*] We'll follow you home! We'll cheer the senators as we pass them; we'll follow you home!

Dru. Nay, my good friends!

Mar. Come, come; let us follow him to his house.

Dru. Well; since you will not be denied— [*Going.*

Caius. Stay, Livius Drusus! Let me speak with you.

Dru. Your pleasure, Caius?

Caius. Pleasure! Livius Drusus,
Look not so sweet upon me. I am no child
Not to know bitter, for that it is smear'd
With honey! Let me rather see thee scowl
A little; and, when thou dost speak, remind me
Of the rough trumpet, more than the soft lute.
By Jove! I can applaud the honest caitiff
Bespeaks his craft!

Dru. The caitiff!

Caius. Ah! ho! Now
You're Livius Drusus! You were only then
The man men took you for—the easy man,
That, so the world went right, cared not who got
The praise; but rather from preferment shrunk,
Than courted it. Who ever thought, in such
A plain and homely piece of stuff, to see
The mighty senate's tool?

Dru. The senate's tool!

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Caius. Now, what a deal of pains for little profit!
If you could play the juggler with me, Livius—
To such perfection practise seeming, as
To pass it on me for reality—
Make my own senses witness 'gainst myself,
That things I know impossible to be,
I see as palpable as if they were,
'Twere worth the acting; but, when I am master
Of all your mystery, and know, as well
As you do, that the prodigy's a lie,
What wanton waste of labour! Livius Drusus,
I know you are a tool!

Dru. Well, let me be so.
I will not quarrel with you, worthy Caius;
Call me whate'er you please.

Caius. What barefaced shifting!
What real fierceness could grow tame so soon!
You turn upon me like a tiger, and,
When open-mouth'd I brave you, straight you play
The crouching spaniel! You'll not quarrel with me!
I want you not to quarrel, Livius Drusus,
But only to be honest to the people.

Dru. Honest!

Caius. Ay, honest! Why do you repeat
My words, as if you fear'd to trust your own?
Do I play echo? Question me, and see
If I so fear to be myself. I act
The wall, which speaks not but with others' tongues?
I say you are not honest to the people;—
I say you are the senate's tool—their bait—
Their juggler—their trick-merchant! If I wrong you,
Burst out at once, and free retort upon me;
Tell me I lie, and smite me to the earth!
I'll rise but to embrace you.

Dru. My good Caius,
Restrain your ardent temper; it doth hurry you
Into madness.

Caius. Give me but an answer, and
I'll be content. Are you not leagued with the senate?

Dru. Your senses leave you, Caius.

Caius. Will you answer me?

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Dru. Throw off this humour!
Caius. Give me an answer, Drusus.
Dru. Madman!
Caius. Are you the creature of the senate?
Dru. Good Caius!
Caius. Do you juggle with the people?
Let me but know you, man, from your own lips;—
'Tis all I want to know you are a traitor.
Dru. A traitor!
Caius. Ay!
Dru. To whom?
Caius. To the poor people,—
The houseless citizens, that sleep at nights
Before the portals, and that starve by day
Under the noses of the senators!
Thou art their magistrate, their friend, their father:
Dost thou betray them? Hast thou sold them? Wilt thou
Juggle them out of the few friends they have left?
Dru. If 'twill content you, Caius, I am one
Who loves alike the senate and the people,—
I am the friend of both.
Caius. The friend of neither!
The senate's tool!—a traitor to the people!
A man that seems to side with neither party;
Will now bend this way, and then make it up,
By leaning a little to the other side:
Talk moderation—patience; with one foot
Step out, and with the other back again;
With one eye, glance his pity on the crowd,
And with the other, crouch to the nobility;—
At any public grievance raise his voice,
And, like a harmless tempest, calm away;
Idle, and noted only for his noise!
Such men are the best instruments of tyranny!
The simple slave is easily discern'd
By his external badge; your order wears
The infamy within!
Dru. I'll leave you, Caius,
And hope your breast will harbour better counsels.
Grudge you the senate's kindness to the people?

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'Tis well: whoe'er serves them, shows love to me.
[*Goes out, followed by the people, shouting.*
Caius. Go! I have tilled a waste, and, with my sweat,
Brought hope of fruitage forth; the superficial
And heartless soil cannot sustain the shoot:
The first harsh wind that sweeps it, leaves it bare!
Fool that I was to till it! Let them go!
I loved them and I served them! Let them go!

Enter VETTIUS.

Vet. Why, Caius, what's the matter, that the people
So follow Drusus?
Caius. Matter! Know you why
The wind was all the morning in the south,
Sits now at north—that's the antagonist point?
When thou canst tell why turns the fitful wind,
I'll tell thee why the people follow Drusus.
Vet. More wonder yet! There stood a group of senators
Under a portico, and, as they pass'd,
They cheer'd them—cheer'd the senators! I thought
They must be mad.
Caius. No, no! they are not mad.
There's not a day in the month, or year, they are
Of sounder mind. They know as well to-day,
As they did yesterday, what things they look at;
That Rome is Rome; that I am Caius; he
They follow, Drusus; and the senators
They cheer, the senators. They are not mad;
But thou art mad to think them so, because
They act the deeds of madmen.

Enter LICINIUS.

Lic. Caius!—Ha!
Well met. Bad news!
Caius. Bad news, and well met, say you?
Why, so it is: for, were you Pluto's herald,
You could not pluck a smile from Caius' cheek,
Would pay the labour of destroying. Come,
Your news!
Lic. Opimius will be consul.

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Caius. Well;
I'm tribune.
Lic. Pray you, show yourself among
The people, or their hearts are lost to you;
Your enemies have won them half already.
Hands they would look at ere they took a gift from them,
They now do shake, as they pertain'd to friends
After long travel greeted; breath they'd turn'd from,
Though wafting fortune's kindest errand, now
They suffer to blow close and full on them,
As it exhaled from lips they'd woo for kisses!
A stranger, now beholding Rome, would ask
You where are her degrees, so is all rank
Confounded. Quinctius is no more than Curtius,
That touches shoulders with him; Servius no less
Than Livius, that plucks Servius by the cloak,
And calls him his 'kind Servius! and would speak
A word with him!'—and, as he whispers in
His ear, knits fingers with him; all the while
Caring as much for Servius, as he does
For Servius' shoe! Let them not, Caius, have
The game to themselves; dispute it with them; come
Among the people!
Caius. Never did I play
The beggar yet, nor will I now;—'tis not
My craft, nor will I learn it, Marcus; no,
Not e'en to please the people!

Enter POMPONIUS.

Pom. Where is Caius?
Caius. Here! here! What makes the man in such request
Is out of favour with the people?
Pom. Look
To your office! Half the votes are promised 'gainst
The next Comitia. Spare no pains to win
The people's favour back again; or, mind!
You are no longer tribune.
Lic. Follow him not, you will but lose your labour.
Let us go to the people, and persuade them,
For their own profit, to retain their tribune;

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His office he must keep. Opimius,
I know, is sworn to his undoing;
Hath no impediment, once consul, if
Caius should lose the tribuneship. Come, come!
[*Goes out.*

Pom. Follow him, Caius; seek once more the people.

Caius. Not a foot
I'll stir to win them! Though the price of their love
Were but the breath would ask for't, it should go
Unbought for me! What! would they take our tigers,
They've seen a hundred times tear limb from limb
The malefactor—would they take them, think you,
For dogs, suppose they fawn'd on them? No wonder
And if they should! I will not go among them,
To pay court to them for their own sakes; cry,
'Be served, I pray you, masters! pray you, be served!
Consent that I should get you food; provide you
Clothing and lodging; find you lands to till!'
While, all the time, they lean the ear to Drusus,
And I must pull them by the cloak to win
Attention! No! No honest man could do it!
I will not go among them! If they are told
That poison's poison, yet will swallow it
For food, in Jove's name let them! Nothing but
The tasting on't will satisfy them. Vettius,
Keep silence! No man urge me to it!
I should not—cannot—will not go among them!
[*Goes out, followed by* VETTIUS *and* POMPONIUS.

END OF ACT III.

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ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter VETTIUS *and* POMPONIUS.

Pom. It was a false return: he had their votes,
Though he has lost his office. Lo you now,
What strides they take that used to walk before
So circumspectly! Scarcely is he brought
Into a private state again, than they
Proceed to abrogate his laws. This blow,
If there it light, where it is meant it should,
Will not fall short a hair's breadth of his life.

Vet. You may be sure of it: for that it was
Opimius got the consulship.

Pom. This morning,
Caius and he met near the capitol;
Flaccus had Caius by the arm;—Opimius,
On seeing him, makes a dead stand, and then,
With his eyes fix'd on him thus, and folded arms,
He follows him right round, and cries to him,
'What, hoa! you, Caius Gracchus, whither now?
What plot's on foot?' Then falls on him with such
A torrent of vile terms, as it would sting
The tamest looker-on to hear.

Vet. And how
Did Caius bear it?

Pom. Why, as one that, seeing
A tiger ready couch'd to spring upon him,
In quick avoidance finds security,
He pass'd in silence on. Opimius had
His Candiot troops with him. But where is Flaccus?

Vet. Gone to bring Caius to the forum. How
Have you disposed our Latin friends?

Pom. About
The rostrum.

Vet. Fear not! If it comes to numbers,
Ours can tell theirs thrice over.

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Enter LICINIUS.

Lic. Friends, well met!
Something's on foot that bodes not good to Caius.
I pass'd just now a group of senators:
One of them named him, and had farther spoken,
But that another placed, on seeing me,
His finger on his lip. You may be sure
They only want occasion to despatch him.
Vet. All Rome perceives it. Men inquire for him
As one whom mischief dogs: 'Is Caius well?
When saw you him?—does he go out to-day
To the forum?'—half under breath, as fearing for
The answer. Others, as his friends pass by,
Lay heads together, and, with eyes glanced towards them,
Whisper with looks portentous. Some do smile
That never smiled before on aught that loved him.
That's the worse sign! A smile from those that hate us,
Looks as some scowl of fate about to fall,
If not already lowering.
Pom. What's to be done?
Lic. Meet them with force
Pom. Agreed!
Vet. Agreed!
Lic. Away, then!
If you have any friend as yet unpledged,
Change oaths with him.
Vet. When meet we in the forum?
Lic. At the third hour—it is the hour of fate.
If they repeal his laws, farewell to Rome! [*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in Caius Gracchus' House —two chairs.*

Enter CORNELIA *and* LICINIA.

Lici. You'll speak to him?
Cor. I will.
Lici. You'll urge him not
To go? You would not throw your richest gem

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Away, though you might give't to one did know
Its value, and did covet it?
Cor. I would not.
Lici. He's coming. [*Going.*] Mother!
Cor. I have said, Licinia. [LICINIA *goes out.*
Yes: there's a point where virtue stops; 'tis there
Where she but loses labour. Ha! but is
Her labour ever lost? I can't debate
That question now; Nature won't let me: she's
Too strong, and I must play the humble part
She sets me. Had he not a wife and child—
He's here! [*Retires.*

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, *without seeing his Mother.*

Caius. I'll wrestle with him for at least
This throw! My laws! What! abrogate my laws!
Oh, insolence of tyranny! Well, well!
We are not so weak as let him. Were he twice
The consul, he shall not lay hands on them;
Yea, though our blood—
Cor. Caius, a word with you.
There's Fulvius Flaccus waiting at the door
With a whole crowd of citizens. Is't you
They want?
Caius. It is.
Cor. 'Tis best, son, to deal frankly
With your mother. What's on foot? No matter!—
Hear me.
I do not like that Flaccus: he's a man
Hath more ambition than integrity,
And zeal than wisdom. Is he of your party?
Caius. He is.
Cor. The sooner then you break with him
The better. Send him word you cannot come.
Caius. My word's already pledged to go with him,
To the forum.
Cor. On what errand, Caius Gracchus?
Is it about your laws they would annul?
Mind, Caius, you're no longer tribune!
Caius. Fear not;
I shall be prudent. [*Going.*

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Cor. [*Holding him.*] Stop, Caius. [*Taking his hand.*]
I can almost think you still
The boy did con his lessons at my knee,
And I could rule in all his little moods
With but a look. Ay, Caius; but a look
Of your mother's made you calm as sunshine, in
Your biggest storm! I would not lose you, Caius!
Caius, I would not lose you! Go not to
The forum!

Caius. Mother—is it you?

Cor. Ay, son;
It is your mother, feels that she is all
The mother, whatsoe'er she seems. I would
Be left a son, my Caius. Go not to
The forum!

Caius. Wherefore, mother? What is there
That I should fear?

Cor. Your brother's blood, my son!
Do I not know you, Caius? Can I not read you,
Without your tongue to help me? Does not his blood
Cry for revenge? and is your ear unapt
To hear it? Caius, that dear brother's death's
The life of all thy acts! 'Twas that did plead
For Vettius—ask'd the tribuneship—revived
Tiberius's laws—defied the senate—made thee
Like a god to Rome, dealing out fate—and, now
Thou art no longer arm'd with thy great office,
Would lead thee forth to sacrifice! My son,
Go not to the forum! 'Tis a worthless cause!
Why should you go, my Caius? To defend
Your laws from abrogation? Think of them
For whom you made those laws: the fickle people
Did lend a hand to pull you from your seat,
And raise up them they shake at! Thou art single,—
Thou hast no seconds. 'Tis a hopeless struggle!
So sunk are all, the heart of public virtue
Has not the blood to make it beat again.

Caius. And should I therefore sink with the base
times?
What, mother, what? Are the gods also base?
Is virtue base? Is honour sunk? Is manhood

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A thing contemptible, and not to be
Maintain'd? Remember you Messina, mother?
Once from its promontory we beheld
A galley in a storm; and, as the bark
Approach'd the fatal shore, could well discern
The features of the crew with horror all
Aghast, save one. Alone he strove to guide
The prow, erect amidst the horrid war
Of winds and waters raging. With one hand
He ruled the hopeless helm; the other strain'd
The fragment of a shiver'd sail; his brow
The while bent proudly on the scowling surge,
At which he scowl'd again. The vessel struck:
One man alone bestrode the wave, and rode
The foaming courser safe. 'Twas he, the same!
You clasp'd your Caius in your arms, and cried,
'Look, look, my son! the brave man ne'er despairs,
And lives where cowards die!' I would but make
Due profit of your lesson.

Cor. Caius—Caius!—

Caius. Mother—I—

Cor. My son!

Caius. Well, I'll not go. [*Sitting down.*] I will be ruled by you,
If you please; let men say what they list of me.
I care not if they whisper as I pass,
And point, and smile, and say to one another,
'Lo, the bold tribune, Gracchus! Lo, the man
Did lord it o'er the senate!' What is't to me?
I know I am your son, and would approve it
If I might; but, since you will not have it so,
I'll stay from the forum, mother; I'll not go
To the forum.

Cor. Know the people you did promise
To go?

Caius. Are they not here, with Fulvius Flaccus,
Expecting me? But let them go with him;
He'll speak for them; he'll be their friend; he'll dare
Oppose the senate; he'll preserve my laws,
If he can. If there's no other man to speak
For liberty, he'll do it! Pray you, mother,

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Send Lucius to them ; tell them I'll not go
Abroad to-day.
Cor. You must go to the forum ! You must.
Caius. Not if you will it not.
Cor. I neither will it,
Nor will it not.
Caius. Unless you bid me go,
They go without me.
Cor. Why, I think, as it is,
You cannot help but go. I know not what's
The matter ; 'tis, perhaps, the fears of thy wife
Infect me ; but I've dark forebodings, Caius.
What will be left me, should I lose thee, son ?
Caius. My monument !
Cor. Go to the forum—go !
You are Cornelia's son !
Caius. My only use
Of life's to prove it !
Cor. Go—go—go ! my Caius !
[*Going, but turns and embraces her son.—*
They go out severally.

SCENE III.—*A Square, with the Statue of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus.*

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, TITUS, MARCUS, *and* Citizens.

Caius. What son of Rome may not his country call
To do her service ? Romans, you desire
I should defend your laws from abrogation,
And I obey you.
Tit. Worthy Caius !
Caius. Some coldness there has been between us ; but
We know the cause, and so are friends again.
Our enemies may once prevail by cunning,
But not a second time. Now show yourselves
The men you should be. If your liberties
And rights are dear to you, be faithful to them.
Fear not the senate ; call upon the tribes ;
Be freemen—none will dare to make you slaves !

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Enter FLACCUS.

Fla. Caius, the consul is about to pass,
Proceeding to the sacrifice which he
Has order'd, to give impious sanctity
To his designs against you.
Caius. Pray you, now,
My friends, observe good order. Let them pass.
[*The* Citizens *retire.*

MUSIC.—*A Procession of Priests, &c., followed by* OPIMIUS *as Consul, attended by* DRUSUS *and Senators.*

Opi. [*Seeing* GRACCHUS.] What! do you wait to interrupt us here,—
You, Caius Gracchus, Fulvius, and the rest,
With your lewd rabble?
Caius. You may see, Opimius,
The way is clear for you.
Opi. Oh! is it so?
'Tis well, indeed, you give us leave to pass!
You're very humble now, good Caius Gracchus!
Drusus, is this the man that thought to ride
The necks of the senators? This the lawgiver,
That parcell'd out the lands of the patricians?
Why, yes! 'Tis Caius Gracchus!
Caius. True, Opimius,
True; it is Caius Gracchus.
Opi. How! so humble?
What! this the gentleman that rail'd at us
The other day, with such a fearless tongue?
Call'd us luxurious, proud—oppressors—tyrants,—
The common robbers of the state? This he?
What knave may not grow honest! Speak your soul,
Tell us you hate us; spurn us, mock us, and [man!
Revile us, as you were wont to do! I hate
The double villain. We are not the consul!
These are not lictors! Gracchus does not fear
To let us know his thoughts.
Caius. I will not stay
To give you plea of quarrel. Know, Opimius,
The man that loves his country may respect
The shadow of her greatness. [*Goes out.*

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Opi. Ha!—Take heed;
Look to your safety! On to the sacrifice.
[*Music.*—OPIMIUS *and his party go out.*
Fla. Is this to be endured? Could Caius brook it?
I have no blood of his within my veins,
And yet they boil!
Mar. Had he but spoke the word,
He should have been avenged. He rail'd at us. Come,
Let us follow him!
Fit. Hold, for the common cause!
Mar. The common cause were served by any hurt that
We could do Opimius. He's a tyrant!
Fla. The worst of tyrants!
Mar. Come, let's follow him, and rid our country of a tyrant!
Tit. Stay! How are we prepared for such a thing?
Remember, too, it is the time of sacrifice.
Fla. Caius was tame to bear it. See! he returns,
And chafting like a flood from its embankment
New burst.

Re-enter CAIUS GRACCHUS.

Caius. Endure a life on sufferance
Like this! Why, you must think me water, friends,
Or something farther still removed from blood—
If there's such poverty in nature—that
I seem to have no proper heat in me,
To keep cool veins under the force of that
Whose only sight, I see, sets yours a-boiling.
Mar. Let's follow him, and rid our country of
A tyrant!
Caius. [*Rushing before them.*] No!
Tit. Here comes his lictor with
The entrails.

Enter a Lictor, *with the entrails.*

Lictor. Way, there, evil citizens! [*Goes out.*
Tit. Down with him! 'Tis an evil word for him.
Citizens. Down with him!
[TITUS *and* Citizens *rush out.*

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Caius. Hold! hold! Come back, my friends—my countrymen!
You know not—— [*A loud groan without.*

Re-enter TITUS, *with a bloody dagger.*

Tit. You are revenged! He's dead!
Caius. Blood shed! Blood is not wash'd away except
With blood! [*The* Citizens *return slowly and sullenly.*
Why do you this? Why do you ever that
You should not do? Who bade you take my quarrel
Into your own hands? Who? I did not ask you
For help or counsel. Gods! if I do choose
To stake my life, may I not fix the game
I throw't away on? Had I not here the tyrant
Himself, within arm's reach, that but a stride,
Like this, had made my weapon and his heart
Acquainted? Had I not? If I did think
A guest of spleen, a fit of temper, a
Sour stomach, was a thing to pitch against
The cause—had I not man enough in me,
Though thrice the number of his satellites
Environ'd him, to smite him to my foot?
And you must smite his slave! Now, look you, for
That slave, the stones we tread on shall weep blood,
And our veins lend the tears!
Fla. Remember, 'twas
For you they did it.
Caius. Me? Oh! I retain
The memory of all they have done for me!
Fla. Observe their looks: they are depress'd and spiritless
From your rebuke. It is not well to bring
Their zeal to such an ebb.
Caius. It is, indeed,
The tide for ebbing. [*Thunder.*] Listen! Do you hear?
Tit. The heavens lower——
Caius. On us! There is something awful in their speech,
More than the sound. [*Thunder again.*] That's anger!

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Enter VETTIUS, *hastily.*

Vet. Disperse! disperse! The consul heavily
Has ta'en his lictor's death. The senate is
Convoked.

[*Louder thunder—the* Citizens *withdraw slowly.*

Caius. Now it speaks out! 'Tis not for naught
They keep that stirring in the heavens. Some foot,
On haste with wrath, hath from Jove's presence now
Gone forth, the bearer of an errand, whose
Dread import hath set all Olympus shaking!

Fla. You are infusing fear into the crowd:
This is no way to remedy the evil.
Think what can best be done.

Caius. Nothing is best,
Where nothing can be done.

Fla. Here comes your brother.

Enter LICINIUS, *hastily.*

Lic. A decree has pass'd the senate, that the consul
Look to the public safety. Caius, you,
And Fulvius Flaccus, are the men they aim at;
You must protect yourselves!

[*Thunders still louder.*

Fla. Observe, the citizens fall off from us.

Caius. Why, let them go! As long as our veins are full,
Why should theirs flow? Let them fall off to one—
To none! Their carrion would but poison Rome,
And breed a mortal, general pestilence!
Let them, I say! It shall be writ in blood,
The man who labours for the people's good,
The people shall give up to sacrifice!
So shall their groans unpitied rend their breasts,—
Unheeded, save of them whose ears confess
No sweeter music! Here, even at the foot
Of my great father's statue, I will brave
The tyrant's wrath alone!

[*Kneels at his father's statue, hiding his face with his hands.*

Fla. What! hold your neck
To the axe?

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Enter POMPONIUS, *hastily.*

Pom. Caius, the consul's lictors, I'm advised,
Are on the watch for you.
Fla. Meet force with force!
[*The* Citizens *return in larger numbers.*
The people throng to you again. 'Twas but
The storm dispersed them.
Lic. Gracchus—Caius Gracchus!
If you're a man, act like one. Keep not terms
With men do make the laws a plea for acts
The laws forbid. The senate is the traitor.
Think, in its bloody edict you are led
Already to the slaughter. Caius, 'tis
Your country calls on you!
Pom. With tears!
Fla. With wrongs!
Lic. Tiberius calls on you!
Caius. Give me your hands.
'Tis done, my friends—'tis past! I will! [*Low thunder.*]
You hear?
Great Jove! our fates command us!
Fla. Muster, friends,
Betimes to-morrow on Mount Aventine.
We've scanty time for preparation. Night
Draws on apace. Some of you keep a watch
Near Caius' house, lest, in the dead of night,
They steal upon him. Caius, fare thee well!
We meet to-morrow.
Caius. I will meet thee, Flaccus;
But let not the first blow be ours.
Fla. It cannot;
They strike already that do draw on us.
Caius. Against myself, I pledge myself. O Rome!
The sons do love thee most, must make thee bleed!
[*They go out.*

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SCENE IV.—*An Apartment in the House of Caius Gracchus—a couch.*

Enter CORNELIA *and* LICINIA, *with a scroll, followed by* LUCIUS, *carrying lights.*

Cor. Will not you go to bed?
Lici. Not till he comes.
Cor. He must sup out.
Lici. Well, I'll sit up for him.
Cor. What, with those eyes, that look so ill prepared
To play the watcher?
Lici. I will read, Cornelia,
And keep myself awake. I can't lie down;
Go you to bed, my mother.
Cor. I'll not give you
Excuse for so uncall'd-for labour, by
Partaking it. Good night!
Lici. Good night!
[CORNELIA *goes out followed by* LUCIUS.
I wish
He would come home! Why should he sup abroad
To-night? Most like, it is my brother's fault:
He never lets him rest with taking him
To Carbo's house—or Flaccus's—or some
Such place. I would he had a wife himself,
To keep him more at home. Cornelia's right;
I'm half asleep already. A heavy lid
Is strange companion to an anxious heart!
Come, thou, that canst discourse without a tongue,—
Cunning beguiler of the lonely! talk to me,
And, for my dear lord, help me to keep watch!
[*She sits on the couch, and reads—grows gradually drowsier—the scroll falls from her hand, and she sleeps.*

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, *without seeing her.*

Caius. What meant the boy by starting when he let
Me in? What's in my face to make him hold
His breath, and change his colour at? I thought
At first the house was not my own; and never

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Look'd it so like my own! A hundred objects,
Day after day I've pass'd, with just as much
Of consciousness as they had not been here,
I now distinguish with a feeling of
Such recognition, as invest them with
The worth of precious things. The common couch
Stands in our supper-room, a dozen times
A day I've thrown myself upon, without
Thought it supported me. When now I pass'd it,
I could not help but stop, as it had been
Some special minister of happiness
Did challenge salutation.——What! Licinia?
Asleep, too! She is sitting up for me!
Come, now, Conspiracy, thou bold redresser
Of grievances! dost doubly stake thy life!
Thou wilt achieve beneath the peaceful brows
Of the household eaves, that never thought to see it,
What were done better in the stony eyes
Of frowning battlements—and lead along
The streets, where children, wives, and matrons tread,
Mars' revels, fitter to be acted on
Some far removed, unfrequented waste,—
Come, now! and, while the silken bands of sleep
Hold thy unconscious, unoffending victim,
Look on, and scan thy plea of conjuration,
And see if it be proof! Thou canst not do it!
Already is the ague creeping o'er
Thy flesh, at longer trial of the test
Would shake the weapon from thy hand, though clench'd
With thousand oaths! That I should see her thus!
I must not look on her again, nor speak to her!
I'll call her maid to watch by her, and then
I will to bed and sleep—or feign to sleep. [*Going.*

Lici. [*In her sleep.*] Keep him in, mother! Let him not go forth!
They'll kill my Caius!

Caius. [*Returning.*] She is dreaming of me.
Some horrible conceit her fancy frames
To cheat her with. Had I not better wake her?
For what? To do in earnest, what I would not
Her fancy did, would do it but in jest.

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Oh, proper kindness! Whatsoe'er it was,
'Tis gone! How calm! He ne'er hath look'd on sleep,
That hath not caught it lighted on the lids
Of virtue! I must gaze on her no longer! [*Going.*

Lici. [*At first in her sleep, then awaking and rushing forward.*] Oh, spare him! save him! give him to his wife!
Strike here—strike here! [CAIUS *catches her in his arms.*]
My Caius!—'Twas a dream!
But press me to thy heart; speak to me, Caius!
I know 'tis you; but press me—speak to me!
It was a horrid dream!

Caius. Ne'er mind it, love.

Lici. No more I do—dreams are but dreams. 'Tis you!
This is our house, and 'tis our sitting room
We are talking in; and it is night—still night,
That never walk'd her silent round, methinks,
With softer step. List, love! when we are still,
Nought's stirring. Why, how pale you look, my Caius!

Caius. Do I?

Lici. Indeed you do; and when you smile,
Methinks you do grow paler. Don't smile, Caius:
Your smile fits not what it doth cover, and
Is meant to hide, not show. Gods! husband, what's
The matter?

Caius. Sweet, you frighten'd me just now.

Lici. Frighten'd you!

Caius. Ay: a woman's shriek starts terrors,
Where trumpets might redouble their alarms,
And not one fear awake.

Lici. And did I shriek?
I knew not what I did. 'Twas such a dream!
I'll tell it you, love.

Caius. No, never mind, Licinia.

Lici. Not tell it you? Are you afraid to hear it?

Caius. Afraid of a shadow! No, Licinia.
'Twould pain you to go over it.

Lici. Not it!
Pain me? Is not your arm around me, Caius?
Do I not hear you talking to me? see you?

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Feel you?—Not want a proof that you are safe
And well?—I dream'd that you lay bleeding, love,
At the consul's feet, stood over you and smiled,
And struck! and struck! Why, what's the matter,
Caius,
That you hold your hand to your forehead?
Caius. Fool that I was,
To walk bareheaded yesternight in the garden!
That shooting pain's the profit on't. Go on—
Go on, Licinia. Did the consul use
His weapon like a soldier?
Lici. Like a demon!
Caius. No doubt! no doubt!
Lici. What, Caius?
Caius. It would be
An idle dream had not the thrift to turn
A man into a demon! Pr'ythee, love,
What figure took he next?
Lici. You make a jest
Of me. I'll tell no more of it. I'm glad
You are so merry.
Caius. Merry!
Lici. Are you not?
Caius. Not if it does not please you, love.
Lici. Indeed
But it does! Be ever merry! You'll be merry
To-morrow, I will answer for't; and so
Will I, and so will all the house. Now, why,
Tell me, should we be merry, love, to-morrow,
Of all the days in the year?
Caius. Indeed, Licinia,
I cannot tell.
Lici. You cannot tell—you, Caius!
Now, tell not that to any one! It is
The birthday of our boy! There was a time
I fear'd you would not live to see it; but
That time is past. Thank Jupiter for what
He sends to-morrow! What are you thinking of?
Caius. Our boy.
Lici. Is that the way to think of our boy?
Think of him with a smile; he is a boy

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To make a father proud, although it is
His mother says it.
Caius. So he is. We'll go
To rest, love.
Lici. Nay, I am not weary, Caius;
Sit up a while, and talk.
Caius. I would not talk
To-night.
Lici. No more would I. We'll go to rest.
Come, Caius. Now, I have not told you half
The reason we shall be so happy, love,
To-morrow. Can't you guess?
Caius. What is't, Licinia?
Lici. Is it not our wedding-day?
Caius. It is! it is!
Lici. Have we not reason to be happy? I have:
Have not you? Sha'n't we be happy? Say we shall!
Caius. We shall—to be sure——
Lici. Say it out!
Caius. To be sure we shall!
Why should we not? Why should we——Come to
rest,—
Come to rest. It grows to torture!
Lici. What, my Caius?
Caius. The pain I told you of.
Lici. You are not well;
You do not look as you were well, nor speak.
All's wrong if you're not well.
Caius. A little sleep
Will set all right.
Lici. It will—it will!
Caius. Come, love!
Lici. I would not for the world you should be ill
To-morrow—or any day—but most of all
To-morrow.
Caius. Come to rest, love!
Lici. Are you sure
'Tis nothing needs be fear'd?
Caius. Don't question me:
The slightest noise distracts me.
Lici. Does it, Caius?

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You're ill, indeed, then—you are very ill!
What shall be done for you?
Caius. You drive me mad!
Don't mind me, love—don't mind me! Come to rest.
[*They go out.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Street before Caius' House—lamps at a distance.*

Citizens discovered lying asleep in various postures, armed—others watching.

Enter TITUS.

Tit. Almost the morning dawns. What! rouse ye, friends!
Up, drowsy comrades, up! 'Tis time—'tis time!
[*They rise.*

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS *from the house.*

Caius. Ha! is it time, my friends?
Tit. It is, good Caius.
Caius. What noise of steps is that?
Tit. A band of citizens,
Crossing the end of the street.
Caius. Go on before, my friends; I'll follow you.
[TITUS *and* Citizens *go out.*
I will but take a last look of the house.
To think of what I leave within that house!
I left her sleeping. Gods! upon the brink
Of what a precipice!—and she must down,—
I cannot save her. My last kiss, when I
Did print upon her cheek, she breathed my name,
And, all unconscious as she was, with such
A plaintive cadence—even Pity's self,
Composed of tears and murmurs as she is,

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In her most melting mood, did never frame
More tender. But that I did tear myself
At once away—for all that manhood, back'd
By honour, that did never yet relent,
Had urged upon me—I must have foregone
My purpose. Thought must look another way!
Tiberius—I am coming! Art thou here,
My brother, waiting for me? Yes, I feel
Thou art! I am ready! Mighty shade, lead on!
[*Going.*

Enter LICINIA, *hastily.*

Lici. [*Rushing towards him.*] Caius!—Oh, have I found you?

Caius. My Licinia,
Why do you quit your bed?

Lici. To seek you, Caius.
To bring you back with me! Come into the house.

Caius. What fear you, love?

Lici. I know not what I fear.
But well I know that I have cause to fear!
Your putting off your journey yesterday—
Your going to the forum, as you did—
Your making it so late ere you came back—
Your looks and answers when you did come back—
Your rising now, at this unwonted hour,—
A thousand thousand things that I could name,
Had I the time to think of them, forewarn me
You go not forth for good!

Caius. Licinia! wife!
Collect yourself to listen to me, now.
I must go forth, and may not be prevented.
Why, what's the matter with you? Can't a man
Get up a little hour or two before
His wonted time, and take a walk, but he
Must run into a lion's mouth? For shame!
If this were told of Caius' wife! Go in;
Get thee to bed again; and take this kiss
Along with thee.

Lici. I cannot quit you, Caius,—
I cannot let you go! Spite of myself,
I cling to you, as though my arms were bound

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About you by a spell! Do you know I am ill?
I'm very ill! in sooth, I am so ill,
It is not kind of you to leave me, Caius.
Caius, you would not leave me when I'm ill?
You surely never would! Let me lean on you,
And take me into the house. I thank you, Caius.

Caius. [*Conducting her to the door, and stopping.*] There!

Lici. Would you quit me at the threshold? Won't you
Come in, too? Caius, do come in! Sure, Caius,
You can go forth by and by.

Caius. I must go forth
At once, love.

Lici. Must? In truth you must not—will not!

Caius. [*Going.*] Farewell!

Lici. Stop, Caius—stop! [*Following him, catching hold of his robe, and discovering a sword under his arm.*] Is it to use
That sword you go abroad? Is it, my husband?
It is—alas! it is! You would go forth
To sell your life for an ungrateful people;
To quit your wife and child for men, look'd on
And saw your brother murder'd, and will now
Betray even you to death! Caius, you trust
The faith of men that have no faith, except
When trial is not near. Go not, my Caius!
My lord! my husband! father of my child!
Go not, but hear your poor distracted wife!

Caius. Licinia, now is it perverse in you
To fancy danger. I have business forth.
Is it a time to walk the streets unarm'd,
When drunken revellers from breaking up
Of banquets are abroad? No more of this!
In—in! my love. Be sure I'll make all haste.
Thy thin robe suits not, sweet, the morning air.
In, my Licinia, in! there's nought to fear!

[*Trumpet without.*

Lici. What's that? [*Trumpet again.*] Again! Speaks not that summoner
To thee?

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Caius. Dear wife—
Lici. Come into the house—come in!
If I'm thy wife, whose interest in thee
Shall push by mine? Whose claim to hold thy pledge
Calls on thee with a right can shut out mine?
Thou shalt not go! [*Trumpet.*
Caius. Licinia——
Lici. Nay, thou shalt not!
Caius. Let go my robe!
Lici. I will not let it go!
You hurt me, Caius!—Know you, you do hurt me?
For Juno's sake, dear husband! Caius,—oh!
You gripe my wrist till I am sick with the pain!
If any one had said it! Promise one thing,
And I will let thee go.
Caius. What is it?
Lici. Kill me!
Caius. [*Catching her to his breast.*] Licinia!
Lici. [*Nearly fainting in his arms.*] Ah!
Caius. Gods! I have killed thee!
Lici. No!
Or, if you have, 'tis with a sudden draught
Of too sweet life! Bless thee, my Caius—bless thee!
You will not go—you'll stay with me—you'll come
with me—
You'll live for me! Come in! come in! come in!

Enter LICINIUS.

Lic. What keeps you, Caius?
Caius. [*Apart to him.*] Take her from about
My neck.
Lici. I hear you, Caius! There! Myself
Will do that kindness for thee. Thou art free
To go. Stay, husband! Give me from about
Thy neck that collar which thou wear'st, to keep it
As thy last gift.
Caius. Here, my Licinia.
Lici. What!
Nothing about me I can give thee in
Exchange for't? Oh! I have a token yet,
That hath the virtue of an amulet

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To him believes in't. One thing, I do know,—
Steel, at its sight, hath all as harmless turn'd
As point of down, that cannot stand against
The tenderest breath. Swear only, stay till
I fetch one gift, one last, one parting gift.
[*She goes out hurriedly.*

Caius. Bring it, love!

Lic. Now Caius,
Now is your time! wait not till she returns.

Caius. I have promised her.

Lic. And if you promised her
To pluck an eye out, would you think it kinder
To do't, than leave't undone? Away, at once!
The cause—the cause!

Re-enter LICINIA, *hastily, with her Child.*

Lici. The boy, my Caius!

Caius. Ha!

Lici. Nay, if thou look'st that way upon thy child,
I'm satisfied there is no hope for me! [*Kneels.*

Caius. Why, was this kind?

Lici. I do not know that word.
It stands for nothing—worse! 'Tis found the thing
It says it is not. Husbands are call'd kind,
That break the foolish hearts are knit to them;
And fathers kind, who their own children do
Make orphans of; and brothers kind, who play
The parts of bloodless strangers; and friends, too,
Whose actions find them foes. More kind are foes
That are not kind, but do not say they are!

Caius. Take the child, wife.

Lici. I will.

Caius. Why dost thou kneel?

Lici. To beg a blessing for him of the gods,
Since thou dost turn him from thee, asking it
Of thee.

Caius. The gods be more to him, Licinia,
Than thou wouldst have me be! Licinia! Ha!
That look.

Lic. Come! come.

Caius. She rivets me! [*Trumpets without.*

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Lic. Do you hear?
Caius. Tear me away! More blessings light upon you
Than I feel pangs, who curse the things I'd bless!
[CAIUS GRACCHUS *and* LICINIUS *go out—alarums continue.*

Enter CORNELIA *from the house, followed by* LUCILLA *and* LUCIUS.

Cor. What's this? Licinia!
Lici. Take the child from me,
Until I lay me down and die.
Cor. And die!
Rise, rise, my daughter!
Lici. Rather thou fall down
Along with me, and pray the gods they send
A thunderbolt to strike us both together!
For both already they have smitten so,
To spare's the countertide of mercy!
Cor. Rise:
We may not tempt the gods! Come into the house,
And show thy tears to it—'twill not tell of thee.
This is the common street, and thou but lend'st
The essence of thy grief to vilest tongues
Will make a jest and marvel on't. Come in.
Lici. You counsel me, and do not know the cause
Whereon you counsel me.
Cor. My son is dead?
Lici. No, no! Yet——
Cor. Yet! Why wouldst thou say he lives,
And but that little word 'twixt him and death?
He is the same as dead;—then think him dead,
As I do.
Lici. And art thou a mother?
Cor. Yes;
The mother of the virtue of my child!
The fashion of his body nature fix'd;—
I had no choice in't—was not ask'd how high
The stature on't should grow—gave not my voice
As to the shape of limb or lineament,
Nor pick'd the shade and texture of the skin;—

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But, of his worth, the modelling was mine :
Say, that is dead, and you may say I'm dead !
Lici. I cannot answer this. I can but marvel,
The weight bows me to earth should seem so light
To you. [*Alarums without.*

Enter LIVIA, *hurriedly.*

Livia. Cornelia !
Cor. Well, Livia ?
Livia. Those fearful noises ! Listen—you will hear
The rush of feet on every side. I've pass'd
Such groups of angry-looking men—some pale—
Some flush'd—some mute, and others muttering
To one another—hurrying all one way,
As all on one momentous object bent.
I came to thee, that we might seek some sanctuary;
For houses are not safe in times like these.
Cor. The Temple of Diana is at hand ;
We will go thither. See, my Livia,
How lost Licinia is ! Take hold of her,
And lead the way. Nobly, ye gods ! oh, nobly !
[*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*Mount Aventine.*

Enter groups of armed Citizens, CAIUS GRACCHUS, FULVIUS FLACCUS, *and* VETTIUS.

Caius. You see—you see ! Their very trumpets shake
Your ranks. How will they stand the blows of those
Whose only breath can stagger ? What ! no means ?
Fla. Twice have we offered terms of peace, which
Have twice refused, and into prison cast [they
Our herald, my own son ; and, not content
With this, they have proclaim'd for a reward
To him who brings your head, its weight in gold.
Caius. Then shall they have it at a dearer price—
The safety of my friends !

Enter POMPONIUS.

Pom. Why stand you here ?
Advance ! A rumour spreads among our ranks,

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That pardon is proclaim'd to those who quit us;
And many friends fall off.
Caius. It shall be so!
Call back the runaways, and let them save
The honour of their manhood! Husbands! drive out
Your sad foreboding thoughts; your wives shall hear
Your feet to-night upon the threshold. Sons!
Check not your pious tears, but let them flow
For joy; your mothers have not lost their props!
Cowards! relax not your strain'd sinews yet,
But live redoubted! Brave hearts! rein your courage,
To give it course upon a fairer field:
Caius alone shall bleed!
Vet. What mean you, Caius?
Caius. To yield myself into the consul's hands,
And save these veins their stores!
Vet. No, by the gods,
You shall not do it!
Caius. Not! Why should I live
At such a price as half these lives, which I
Can, singly dying, save? I cannot live
To give my country freedom: let me die
To save her blood!

Enter LICINIUS.

Lic. Where are your swords, my friends?
Do they become their scabbards or your hands,
When tyranny's so near? Unsheath, I say!
And show their honest faces to our foes,
And make the knaves to blush.
Caius. Draw off our friends;
I'll meet them singly!
Lic. Never!
We'll live or die together! Or, take your course,—
Yield yourself to the tyrant, if you will!
My sword is out, and shall not quit my grasp,
So long as it can strike a link away
From the vile chains that gall us! Leave us, Caius,—
Desert us—fly us—carry with thee half
Our strength! With the remaining half we'll struggle,
Nor vilely live the thralls of tyranny!

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Caius. Oh, Rome! my country!—Oh, my mother,
Is it to shed thy blood I draw my sword? [Rome!
To fill thy matrons' and thy daughters' eyes
With tears, and drain the spirits of thy sons?
Should I not rather turn it 'gainst myself,
And, by the timely sacrifice of one,
Preserve the many? They will not let me do it;
They take from me the rule of mine own acts,
And make me Freedom's slave! What! is it so?
Come, then, the only virtue that is left me,—
The fatal virtue of necessity.
Upon them!
Give them stout hearts, ye gods! to enable them
To stand the flashing of their tyrants' swords!
Deaf to the din of battle let them be!
Senseless to wounds, and without eyes for blood;
That, for this once, they may belie themselves;
Make tyranny to cower, and, from her yoke,
Lift prostrate Liberty, to fall no more. [*They go out.*

SCENE III.—*The Interior of the Temple of Diana—the Statue of the Goddess—a large Portal.*

LICINIA, *kneeling by the statue*—CORNELIA, LIVIA, LUCILLA, *(with Gracchus' Child,)* LUCIUS, *and numerous Females, who had fled for safety to the Temple, discovered.*

Cor. [*To* LUCIUS.] Go, boy; look out and tell me
what thou see'st.
If all is quiet, run to the end of the street,
But venture not beyond—and listen if
Thou hear'st the sound of tumult. Use thy senses,
And hurry back when they do gather for thee
Aught worth the bringing. Hasten now, and, for
Thy life, break not thy bounds. Away!
[LUCIUS *goes out.*

Livia. [*To one of the Females.*] Observe
Cornelia! Now what kind of soul is hers,
That in this hour of trembling can be calm,
As nought but common things were passing round her?
But note her!

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Cor. Livia, you did say, just now,
Your brother told you there had come a herald
Proposing terms of peace.
Livia. He did; but thought
They would not be accepted.
Cor. He thought right;
No more they will. Opimius hath the gust
Too strong for blood, when he hath snuff'd it, not
To taste. He'll lap it: matters not whose veins
'Twill cost the emptying of, so they belong
To honest men. Then will he offer sacrifice!
Oh, man! man! man!—most sacrilegious and
Profane!—that, with thy lips, dost laud the gods,
Whose ordinance thou tearest with thy hands!
The path to whom thou hast with peril so
Beset, that he who seeks may find it out
By good men's graves at many a spot, whereon
They did untimely fall! Why clasp you me,
My Livia?
Livia. Do you hear the clash of swords?
Cor. Indeed I do not. 'Tis your fancy, Livia.
Livia. Nay, 'tis your talking of men's graves.
Cor. Men's graves
Are but men's beds; whereon we lay them, not
For one hard day of toil to follow on
Another! Thankless labour, Livia: sweat,
To him expends it profitless—that goes
To nourish others, and they take, as though
The using were a boon. How fares it with
Licinia?
Livia. All abstracted, as she were
Alive to nought without her. I can draw
No word nor sign from her. There kneels she to
The statue of the goddess, mute as silence,
And in so fixed stillness, you might ask,
Which is the marble?
A Soldier [*Without.*] Way, there! let me in!
Cor. Don't shut the gates, but let him in.
Livia. Who is it?
Cor. One is wounded from the fray;
Sure sign it has commenced!

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I fear for Lucius:
He has gone near it.
Livia. And thou hast a son
Is in it.
Cor. I fear not what I do know,
How much soe'er I feel it. Livia! Livia!
I'm a mother, though I do not wail
To let you know it.

Re-enter LUCIUS.

Now, sir, where have you been?
Finely you've mark'd my orders! Tell me what
You've seen and heard?
Luc. The battle is begun.
Cor. I know it already. Can you tell which side
Is like to win?
Luc. The citizens, they say
Give ground.
Livia. They do?
Cor. I could have told it you
Without the aid of augury. How learn'd
You this?
Luc. From some did carry to his house
The young Valerius, wounded mortally;
Him they do call the comeliest youth in Rome.
Cor. That's right; you speak not out of breath, as though
The house were on fire. Valerius, say you?
Luc. Yes.
I did not know him when I saw him, so
His face was gash'd.
Livia. Oh!
Cor. Hear you, sir! Now know
Yourself a man! You have been nearer to
The fray than you like to tell. You're a fine boy!
What rush of feet is that? Go see.

[LUCIUS *goes out and returns.*

Luc. The citizens
Fly every way; and from the windows and
The houses' top, the women look and wring
Their hands, and wail, and clamour. Listen! you
Will hear them.

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Cor. I can hear them without ears.
Caius Gracchus. [*Without.*] Shut to the gates!
[LUCIUS *goes out.*
Lici. [*Starting up.*] 'Tis Caius!
Caius Gracchus. [*Without.*] Thankless hearts!
Not one presents himself to aid my sword,
Or lend a charger to assist my flight;
But, as I were a racer in the games,
They cry, 'Make haste!' and shout as I pass by!

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS.

May they remain the abject things they are,
Begging their daily pittance from the hands
Of tyrant lords that spurn them! May they crawl
Ever in bondage and in misery,
And never know the blessed rights of freemen!
Here will I perish!
Lici. [*Rushing to him.*] Caius!
Caius. My Licinia!
My mother too!
Lici. Why should you perish? Fly,
And save your life, my Caius! fly! A steed—
A steed! There are a hundred ways to save
Your life; take one of them, my Caius.
Cor. If
There's any hope, my son——
Caius. My child, too!

Enter TITUS.

Tit. Caius!
Caius, remain not here! Pomponius and
Licinius, striving to keep back the consul,
And give you time for flight, have fallen beneath
His hirelings' blows. They have the scent of you:
Another moment's pause, and you are lost.
Cor. Make the attempt, my son!
Lici. Fly! fly!

Re-enter LUCIUS.

Luc. It is
Too late!
Cor. Embrace me, Caius! Oh, my son!
The gods do bare no sword 'gainst virtue!

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Caius. No!
No, mother! My Licinia! give me my child.
[*Aside to* CORNELIA.] Mother, be you a parent to my wife,
A tutor to my child. The lessons you
Did make me con, teach him—none else; he cannot
Learn better!
Lici. Caius! Caius! do you know
No means of flight!
Caius. I do.
Lici. I hear them. Use it,—
Use it, dear husband! Now—
Caius. I will. I'd kiss
My boy first. [*Kisses the child.*] Mother!
[*Embraces* CORNELIA.
Lici. They are here!
Caius. Now thee! [*Embraces* LICINIA.
Lici. Away! What's that you feel for, Caius,
Under your robe?
Caius. Nothing, love, nothing! Rome!
Oh, Rome!

[*A dagger drops from beneath* CAIUS'S *robe—he falls dead—*LICINIA *throws herself on the body—*CORNELIA, *with difficulty, supports herself—the Consul and his troops are heard approaching—she makes a violent effort to recover her self-possession, and snatches* CAIUS'S *Child from the Attendant.*

Enter OPIMIUS *and his party, with Guards, Lictors, &c. hastily.*

[CORNELIA *holds up the child in one hand, and with the other points to the body of* CAIUS—OPIMIUS *and the rest stand fixed in amazement—Flourish, and the curtain falls.*

END OF CAIUS GRACCHUS.

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VIRGINIUS:

A TRAGEDY.

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TO

WILLIAM MACREADY, ESQ.

My Dear Sir,

What can I do less than dedicate this Tragedy to you? This is a question, which you cannot answer; but I can—I cannot do less; and if I could do more, I ought, and would.

I was a perfect stranger to you: you read my play, and at once committed yourself respecting its merits. This, perhaps, is not saying much for your head—but it says a great deal for your heart; and that is the consideration, which, above all others, makes me feel happy, and proud, in subscribing myself,

Your grateful Friend and Servant,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

London,
May 20, 1820.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT COVENT GARDEN IN 1820.)

Appius Claudius	Decemvirs	Mr. Abbot.
Spurius Oppius	Decemvirs	Mr. White.
Vibulanus	Decemvirs	Mr. Jefferies.
Honorius	Patricians	Mr. Norris.
Valerius	Patricians	Mr. Vedy.
Caius Claudius	Clients to Appius	Mr. Connor.
Marcus	Clients to Appius	Mr. Clarfmont.
Dentatus	A Veteran	Mr. Terry.
Virginius	A Centurion	Mr. Macready.
Numitorius	His Brother-in-law.	Mr. Egerton.
Icilius	In love with Virginia	Mr. C. Kemble.
Lucius	Brother of Icilius	Mr. Comer.
Publius	Soldiers	Mr. Mears.
Decius	Soldiers	Mr. Treby.
Sextus	Soldiers	Mr. Crumpton.
Titus	Citizens	Mr. Faucit.
Servius	Citizens	Mr. Atkins.
Cneius	Citizens	Mr. King.
Virginia	Daughter of Virginius	Miss Foote.
Servia	Her Nurse	Mrs. Faucit.
Female Slave		Mrs. Chipp.

Citizens, Male and Female, *Soldiers*, *Lictors*, &c.

SCENE, CHIEFLY ROME.

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PROLOGUE,

BY J. H. REYNOLDS, ESQ.

Spoken by Miss Booth.

[*Speaking behind.*] Nay, Mr. Fawcett, give me leave, I pray:
The audience wait, and I must have my way. [*Enters.*
What! curb a woman's tongue!—as I'm alive,
The wretch would mar our old prerogative!
Ladies! by very dint of pertinacity,
Have I preserved the glory of loquacity.

Oh! could you gaze, as I am gazing now,
And see each man behind with gather'd brow,
And clenched hand (though nought my spirit damps)
Beckoning, with threats, my presence from the lamps:
Each, as I broke my way, declared how well
His art could woo you—to be peaceable!
One is well robed—a second greatly shines,
In the nice balance—of *cast-iron* lines;
A third can sing—a fourth can touch your tears—
A fifth—"I'll see no more!"—a fifth appears,
Who hath been once in Italy, and seen Rome;
In short—there's quite a hubbub in the Green-Room.
But I—a very woman—careless, light—
Fleet idly to your presence, this fair night;
And, craving your sweet pardon, fain would say
A kind word for the poet and his play.

To-night, no idle nondescript lays waste
The fairy and yet placid bower of taste:
No story, piled with dark and cumbrous fate,
And words, that stagger under their own weight;
But one of silent grandeur—simply said,
As though it were awaken'd from the dead!
It is a tale—made beautiful by years;—
Of pure, old Roman sorrow—old in tears!
And those you shed o'er it in childhood may
Still fall—and fall—for sweet Virginia!

Nor doth a crowned poet of the age
Call the sweet spirits from the historic page!
No old familiar dramatist hath spun
This tragic, antique web, to-night—but one,
An unknown author, in a sister land,
Waits, in young fear, the fiat of your hand.

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VIRGINIUS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter SERVIUS *and* CNEIUS.

Ser. Carbo denied a hearing!

Cne. Ay, and Marcellus cast into prison, because he sued a friend of one of the decemvirs for a sum of money he had lent him.

Ser. And Appius resisted not? Appius, that in the first decemvirate was a god to the people!

Cne. Resisted not! Nay, was most loud in favour of the decree; but hither comes Virginius, who interested himself so much in Carbo's affair. He looks a little heated. Is not that Titus he is speaking to? Stand aside, master, and listen.

Enter VIRGINIUS *and* TITUS.

Virginius. Why did you make him decemvir, and first decemvir too?

Tit. We had tried him, and found him honest.

Virginius. And could you not have remained content? Why try him again to find him dishonest? Knew ye not he was a patrician, and of the Claudian family?

Tit. He laid down the consulate——

Virginius. Ha! ha! ha! to be elected into the decemvirate, and he was so; and he laid down his office of decemvir to be re-elected into the decemvirate, and he is so; ay, and by Jupiter! and to the exclu-

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sion of his late colleagues! Did not Titus Genutius lay down the consulate?

Tit. He did.

Virginius. Was he not next to Appius in the decemvirate?

Tit. He was.

Virginius. Did you not find him honest?

Tit. We did find him honest.

Virginius. As honest as Appius Claudius?

Tit. Quite as honest.

Virginius. Quite as honest! And why not re-elect him decemvir? Most sapient people! You re-elect Appius into the decemvirate for his honesty, and you thrust Titus out of the decemvirate—I suppose for his honesty also! Why, Appius was sick of the decemvirate.

Ser. I never heard him say so.

Virginius. But he did say so—say so in my hearing; in presence of the senators Valerius and Caius Claudius, and I don't know how many others. 'Twas known to the whole body of the senate—not that he was sick, but that he said so. Yes, yes; he and his colleagues, he said, had done the work of the republic for a whole year, and it was now but just to grant them a little repose, and appoint others to succeed them.

Tit. Well, well, we can only say he changed his mind.

Virginius. No, no, we needn't say that neither; as he had laboured in the decemvirate, perhaps he thought he might as well repose in the decemvirate.

Tit. I know not what he thought. He is decemvir, and we made him so, and cannot help ourselves. Fare you well, Virginius. Come, let's to the Forum.

[TITUS, SERVIUS, *and* CNEIUS *go out.*

Virginius. You cannot help yourselves! Indeed you cannot:

You help'd to put your masters on your backs:
They like their seat, and make you show your paces.
They ride you—sweat you—curb you—lash you—and
You cannot throw them off with all your mettle!
But here comes one, whose share in giving you

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To such unsparing riders, touches me
More nearly, for that I've an interest
In proving him a man of fair and most
Erect integrity. Good day, Icilius.

Enter Icilius.

Icil. Worthy Virginius! 'tis an evil day
For Rome, that gives her more convincing proof,
The thing she took for hope is but a base
And wretched counterfeit! Our new decemvirs
Are anything but friends to justice and
Their country.

Virginius. You, Icilius, had a hand
In their election. You applied to me
To aid you with my vote in the comitia:
I told you then, and tell you now again,
I am not pleased when a patrician bends
His head to a plebeian's girdle. Mark me!
I'd rather he should stand aloof, and wear
His shoulder high—especially the nephew
Of Caius Claudius.

Icil. I would have pledged my life——

Virginius. 'Twas a high gage, and men have staked
a higher
On grounds as poor as yours—their honour, boy!
Icilius, I have heard it all—your plans—
The understanding 'twixt the heads of the people
(Of whom, Icilius, you are reckon'd one, and
Worthily) and Appius Claudius—all—
'Twas every jot disclosed to me.

Icil. By whom?

Virginius. Siccius Dentatus.

Icil. He disclosed it to you?
Siccius Dentatus is a crabbed man.

Virginius. Siccius Dentatus is an honest man:
There's not a worthier in Rome. How now?
Has he deceived me? Do you call him liar?
My friend! my comrade! honest Siccius,
That has fought in six-score battles?

Icil. Good Virginius,
Siccius Dentatus is my friend—the friend

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Of every honest man in Rome—a brave man—
A most brave man. Except yourself, Virginius,
I do not know a man I prize above
Siccius Dentatus—yet he's a crabbed man.
Virginius. Yes, yes; he is a crabbed man.
Icil. A man
Who loves too much to wear a jealous eye.
Virginius. No, not a whit, where there is double deal-
You are the best judge of your own concerns; [ing.
Yet, if it please you to communicate
With me upon this subject, come and see me.
I told you, boy, I favoured not this stealing
And winding into place. What he deserves,
An honest man dares challenge 'gainst the world.
But come and see me. Appius Claudius chosen
Decemvir, and his former colleagues, that
Were quite as honest as himself, not chosen—
No, not so much as named by him, who named
Himself, and his new associates! Well, 'tis true,
Dog fights with dog, but honesty is not
A cur, doth bait his fellow—and e'en dogs,
By habit of companionship, abide
In terms of faith and cordiality—
But come and see me.
Icil. Appius comes!
The people still throng after him with shouts,
Unwilling to believe their Jupiter
Has mark'd them for his thunder. Will you stay,
And see the homage that they render him?
Virginius. Not I! Stay you; and, as you made him,
hail him;
And shout, and wave your hand, and cry, Long live
Our first and last decemvir, Appius Claudius!
For he is first and last, and every one!
Rome owes you much, Icilius—Fare you well—
I shall be glad to see you at my house.

[VIRGINIUS *goes out.*

Enter APPIUS CLAUDIUS, SICCIUS DENTATUS, LUCIUS, TITUS, SERVIUS, MARCUS, *and Citizens, shouting.*

Tit. Long live our first decemvir!

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Long live Appius Claudius!
Most noble Appius! Appius and the decemvirate for ever! (*Citizens shout*).

App. My countrymen and fellow-citizens,
We will deserve your favour.

Tit. You have deserved it,
And will deserve it.

App. For that end we named
Ourself decemvir.

Tit. You could not have named a better man.

Den. For his own purpose (*Aside*).

App. Be assured, we hold
Our power but for your good. Your gift it was:
And gifts make surest debtors. Fare you well—
And, for your salutations, pardon me
If I repay you only with an echo—
Long live the worthy citizens of Rome!

[APPIUS *and friends go out.*

Den. That was a very pretty echo!—a most soft echo. I never thought your voices were half so sweet! A most melodious echo! I'd have you ever after make your music before the patricians' palaces; they give most exquisite responses!—especially that of Appius Claudius! A most delicate echo!

Tit. What means Dentatus?

Ser. He's ever carping—nothing pleases him.

Den. O! yes—you please me—please me mightily, I assure you.—You are noble legislators, take most especial care of your own interests, bestow your votes most wisely too—on him who has the wit to get you into the humour; and, withal, have most musical voices—most musical—if one may judge by their echo.

Tit. Why, what quarrel have you with our choice? Could we have chosen better?—I say they are ten honest decemvirs we have chosen.

Den. I pray you name them me.

Tit. There's Appius Claudius, first decemvir.

Den. Ay, call him the head; you are right. Appius Claudius, the head. Go on!

Tit. And Quintus Fabius Vibulanus.

Den. The body, that eats and drinks while the head

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thinks. Call him Appius' stomach. Fill him, and keep him from cold and indigestion, and he'll never give Appius the head-ache! Well?—There's excellent comfort in having a good stomach!—Well?

Tit. There's Cornelius, Marcus Servilius, Minucius, and Titus Antonius.

Den. Arms, legs, and thighs!

Tit. And Marcus Rabuleius.

Den. He'll do for a hand, and, as he's a senator, we'll call him the right-hand. We couldn't do less, you know, for a senator! Well?

Luc. At least, you'll say we did well in electing Quintius Petilius, Caius Duellius, and Spurius Oppius, men of our order! sound men! known sticklers for the people—at least you'll say we did well in that!

Den. And who dares say otherwise? "Well!" one might as well say "ill" as "well." "Well" is the very skirt of commendation; next neighbour to that mire and gutter, "ill." "Well" indeed! you acted like yourselves. Nay, e'en yourselves could not have acted better. Why, had you not elected them, Appius would have gone without his left hand and each of his two feet!

Ser. Out! you are dishonest.

Den. Ha!

Ser. What would content you?

Den. A post in a hot battle. Out, you cur! Do you talk to me?

Citizen (*from behind*).

Down with him, he does nothing but insult the people.

[*The crowd approach* DENTATUS, *threateningly.*

Icil. Stand back! Who is't that says down with Siccius Dentatus? Down with him! 'Tis what the enemy could never do; and shall we do it for them? Who uttered that dishonest word? Who uttered it, I say? Let him answer a fitter, though less worthy mate, Lucius Icilius.

Cit. Stand back, and hear Icilius.

Icil. What! haven't I voted for the decemvirs, and do I snarl at his jests? Has he not a right to jest? the

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good, honest Siccius Dentatus, that, alone, at the head of the veterans, vanquished the Æqui for you. Has he not a right to jest ? For shame ! get to your houses ! The worthy Dentatus ! Cheer for him, if you are Romans ! Cheer for him before you go ! Cheer for him, I say !

[*Citizens go out, shouting.*

Den. And now, what thanks do you expect from me, Icilius ?

Icil. None.

Den. By Jupiter, young man, had you thus stepped before me in the heat of battle, I would have cloven you down—but I'm obliged to you, Icilius—and hark you ! There's a piece of furniture in the house of a friend of mine, that's called Virginius, I think you've set your heart upon : dainty enough ; yet not amiss for a young man to covet. Ne'er lose your hopes ! He may be brought into the mind to part with it. As to these curs, I question which I value less, their fawnings or their snarlings. I thank you, boy. Do you walk this way ? I am glad of it. Come ! 'Tis a noble decemvirate you have chosen for us ! Come !

[*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*Virginius's House.*

Enter VIRGINIUS *and* SERVIA.

Virginius. And is this all you have observed ? think
There's nothing strange in that. An L and an I
Twined with a V. Three very innocent letters
To have bred such mischief in thy brain, good Servia.
Come, read this riddle to me.

Servia. You may laugh,
Virginius ; but I'll read the riddle right.
The L doth stand for Lucius ; and the I,
Icilius ; which, I take it, will compose
Lucius Icilius.

Virginius. So it will, good Servia.

Servia. Then, for the V ; why, that is plain Virginia.

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Virginius. And now, what conjuration find you here?

Servia. What should I find, but love? The maid's in love;

And it is with Icilius. Look, the wreath
Is made of roses, that entwines the letters.

Virginius. And this is all?

Ser. And is it not enough?
You'll find this figuring where'er you look:
There's not a piece of dainty work she does—
Embroidery, or painting—not a task
She finishes, but on the skirt, or border,
In needle-work, or pencil, this, her secret,
The silly wench betrays.

Virginius. Go, send her to me—
Stay! Have you spoken to her of it?

Ser. I! Not I, indeed; I left that task to you—
Though once I asked her what the letters meant.
She laugh'd, and drew a scratch across them; but
Had scarce done so, ere her fair visage fell,
For grief that she had spoiled the ciphers—and
A sigh came out, and then almost a tear;
And she did look as piteous on the harm
That she had done, as she had done it to
A thing had sense to feel it. Never after
She let me note her at her work again.
She had good reason!

Virginius. Send her to me, Servia. [SERVIA *goes out.*
There's something here, that looks as it would bring me
Anticipation of my wish. I think
Icilius loves my daughter—nay, I know it;
And such a man I'd challenge for her husband;—
And only waited, till her forward spring
Put on, a little more, the genial likeness
Of colouring into summer, ere I sought
To nurse a flower, which, blossoming too early,
Too early often dies; but if it springs
Spontaneous, and, unlooked for, woos our hand
To tend and cherish it, the growth is healthful;
And 'twere untimely, as unkind, to check it.
I'll ascertain it shortly—soft, she comes.

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Enter VIRGINIA.

Virginia. Well, Father, what's your will?
Virginius. I wish'd to see you,
To ask you of your tasks—how they go on—
And what your masters say of you—what last
You did. I hope you never play
The truant?
Virginia. The truant! No, indeed, Virginius.
Virginius. I am sure you do not—kiss me!
Virginia. O my father!
I am so happy, when you're kind to me!
Virginius. You are so happy when I'm kind to you!
Am I not always kind? I never spoke
An angry word to you in all my life,
Virginia! You are happy when I'm kind!
That's strange; and makes me think you have some reason
To fear I may be otherwise than kind—
Is't so, my girl?
Virginia. Indeed, I did not know
What I was saying to you!
Virginius. Why, that's worse
And worse! What! when you said your father's kindness
Made you so happy, am I to believe
You were not thinking of him?
Virginia. I———— *(Greatly confused.)*
Virginius. Go fetch me
The latest task you did. [VIRGINIA *goes out.*
It is enough.
Her artless speech, like crystal, shows the thing
'Twould hide, but only covers. 'Tis enough!
She loves, and fears her father may condemn.
Virginia. (*re-entering with a painting.*) Here, Sir.
Virginius. What's this?
Virginia. 'Tis Homer's history
Of great Achilles parting from Briseis.
Virginius. You have done it well. The colouring is good,
The figures well design'd. 'Tis very well!—
Whose face is this you've given to Achilles?

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Virginia. Whose face?

Virginius. I've seen this face! Tut! tut! I know it
As well as I do my own, yet can't bethink me
Whose face it is!

Virginia. You mean Achilles' face?

Virginius. Did I not say so! 'Tis the very face
Of—No! no! Not of him. There's too much youth
And comeliness, and too much fire, to suit
The face of Siccius Dentatus.

Virginia. O!
You surely never took it for his face!

Virginius. Why, no; for now I look again, I'd swear
You lost the copy ere you drew the head;
And, to requite Achilles for the want
Of his own face, contrived to borrow one
From Lucius Icilius (*Enter* DENTATUS). My Dentatus,
I am glad to see you!

Den. 'Tis not for my news, then.

Virginius. Your news! What news?

Den. More violence and wrong from these new masters of ours, our noble decemvirs—these demi-gods of the good people of Rome! No man's property is safe from them. Nay, it appears we hold our wives and daughters but by the tenure of their will. Their liking is the law. The senators themselves, scared at their audacious rule, withdraw themselves to their villas, and leave us to our fate. There are rumours, also, of new incursions by the Sabines.

Virginius. Rome never saw such days.

Den. And she'll see worse, unless I fail in my reckoning. Is that Virginia? I saw her not before. How does the fair Virginia? Why, she is quite a woman. I was just now wishing for a daughter.

Virginius. A plague you mean.

Den. I am sure you should not say so.

Virginia. Indeed he should not; and he does not say so,
Dentatus—not that I am not a plague,
But that he does not think me one, for all
I do to weary him. I am sure, Dentatus,

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If to be thought to do well is to do well,
There's nothing I do ill; But it is far
From that! for few things do I as I ought—
Yet everything is well done with my father,
Dentatus.

Virginius. That's well done, is it not, my friend?
(*Aside.*)
But if you had a daughter, what would you do with her?

Den. I'd give her to Icilius. I should have been just now torn to pieces, but for his good offices. The gentle citizens, that are driven about by the decemvirs' lictors, like a herd of tame oxen, and, with most beast-like docility, only low applauses to them in return, would have done me the kindness to knock my brains out; but the noble Icilius bearded them singly, and railed them into temper. Had I a daughter worthy of such a husband, he should have such a wife, and a patrician's dower along with her.

Virginius. I wish to speak with you, Dentatus. Icilius is a young man, whom I honour, but so far only as his conduct gives me warrant. He has had, as thou knowest, a principal hand in helping us to our decemvirs. It may be that he is what I would gladly think him; but I must see him clearly, clearly, Dentatus. If he has acted with the remotest understanding, touching the views of these new tyrants, that we are cursed withal, I disclaim him as my friend! I cast him off for ever! [VIRGINIUS *and* DENTATUS *go out.*

Virginia. How is it with my heart? I feel as one
That has lost everything, and just before
Had nothing left to wish for! He will cast
Icilius off!—I never told it yet;
But take of me, thou gentle air, the secret—
And ever after breathe more balmy sweet—
I love Icilius! Yes, although to thee
I fear to tell it, that hast neither eye
To scan my looks, nor voice to echo me,
Nor e'en an o'er-apt ear to catch my words;
Yet, sweet invisible confidant, my secret
Once being thine—I tell thee, and I tell thee

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Again—and yet again. I love Icilius!
He'll cast Icilius off!—not if Icilius
Approve his honour. That he'll ever do;
He speaks, and looks, and moves a thing of honour,
Or honour never yet spoke, look'd, or moved,
Or was a thing of earth. O come, Icilius!
Do but appear, and thou art vindicated.

ICILIUS, *entering.*

Virginia! sweet Virginia! sure I heard
My name pronounced. Was it by thee, Virginia?
Thou dost not answer! Then it was by thee—
O! wouldst thou tell me why thou namedst Icilius!
Virginia. My father is incensed with thee. Dentatus
Has told him of the new decemvirate,
How they abuse their office. You, he knows,
Have favour'd their election, and he fears
May have some understanding of their plans.
Icil. He wrongs me then!
Virginia. I thank the gods!
Icil. For me!
Virginia? Do you thank the gods for me?
Your eye is moist—yet that may be for pity.
Your hand doth tremble—that may be for fear;
Your cheek is cover'd o'er with blushes! What,
O what can that be for?
Virginia. Icilius, leave me!
Icil. Leave thee, Virginia! O, a word—a word
Trembles upon my tongue, which, if it match
The thought that moves thee, now, and thou wilt let me
Pronounce that word, to speak that thought for thee,
I'll breathe, though I expire in the ecstacy
Of uttering it.
Virginia. Icilius, will you leave me?
Icil. Love! Love! Virginia! Love! If I have spoke
Thy thought aright, ne'er be it said again,
The heart requires more service than the tongue
Can, at its best, perform. My tongue hath served
Two hearts—but lest it should o'erboast itself,
Two hearts with but one thought. Virginia!

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Virginia, speak.

[*Virginia covers her face with her hands.*

O, I have loved thee long;
So much the more ecstatic my delight,
To find thee mine at length.

Virginia. My secret's yours.
Keep it, and honour it, Icilius.

Enter VIRGINIUS *and* DENTATUS *behind.*

Virginius. Icilius here!

Virginia. I ask thee now to leave me!

Icilius. Leave thee! who leaves a treasure he has coveted
So long, and found so newly, ere he scans it
Again, and o'er again; and asks and answers,
Repeats and answers, answers and repeats,
The half-mistrustful, half-assured question—
And is it mine indeed?

Virginia. Indeed! indeed!
Now leave me.

Icilius. I must see thy father first,
And lay my soul before him.

Virginia. Not to-night.

Icil. Now worse than ever, dear Virginia;
Can I endure his doubts; I'll lay my soul
Naked before him—win his friendship quite,
Or lose myself for ever! [*Going, is met by* VIRGINIUS.

Virginius. Stop, Icilius!
Thou seest that hand? It is a Roman's, boy;
'Tis sworn to liberty—It is the friend
Of honour.—Dost thou think so?

Icil. Do I think
Virginius owns that hand?

Virginius. Then you'll believe
It has an oath deadly to tyranny,
And is the foe of falsehood! By the gods,
Knew it the lurking place of treason, though
It were a brother's heart, 'twould drag the caitiff
Forth. Darest thou take that hand?

Icil. I dare, Virginius.

Virginius. Then take it! Is it weak in thy embrace?

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Returns it not thy gripe? Thou wilt not hold
Faster by it than it will hold by thee!
I overheard thee say, thou wast resolved
To win my friendship quite—Thou canst not win
What thou hast won already! You will stay
And sup with us to-night?

Dent. To be sure he will!

Virginius. And, hark you, Sir,
At your convenient time, appoint a day
Your friends and kinsmen may confer with me—
There is a bargain I would strike with you.
Come, to the supper-room. Do you wait for me,
To lead Virginia in, or will you do it?
Come on, I say; come on. Your hand, Dentatus.

[*They go out.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter PUBLIUS *and* SEXTUS.

Pub. This way! We muster at the Flaminian gate.

Sext. Shall we not wait for Decius?

Pub. No; were he ten times Decius.—They'll have already begun their march. Come on!

Enter NUMITORIUS.

Num. Do you belong to the fourth legion?

Pub. We do.

Num. They are upon their march, then?

Pub. I told you so—Come on! come on!

[*Soldiers go out.*

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Numitorius, what soldiers were those that just now parted from you?

Num. Soldiers hastening to overtake the army, that's now upon its march.

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Luc. 'Tis all confirmed, then; the Sabines are in force upon our borders.

Num. I pray you tell me something new! Know you not the senate has met, and the decemvirs have come off triumphant in spite of all opposition?

Luc. Should they have been opposed in such a strait as this?

Num. Ay, should they. They dared not have armed a single citizen without the order of the senate; which, had they not obtained, the country would have been left naked to the foe, and then they had been forced to make room for more popular magistrates.

Luc. Why were they not opposed, then?

Num. Did not I tell you they were opposed? Caius Claudius, Appius's own uncle, and Honorius, that noble senator, opposed them; and it was like to go against them, but for the brawling insolence of Spurius Oppius, and the effrontery of the head decemvir, backed by the young patricians.

Luc. So they are empowered to take up arms?

Num. To be sure they are; and they have done so. One body has already marched, and by this time, no doubt, has come to blows with the enemy. The levy is still proceeding. All the decemvirs, but Appius, take the field. He remains in Rome to keep good order, that is the violator of all order. Why, where have you been, Lucius, to have felt no movement of so great and wide a stir? Your brother meets Virginius at his house to-day. Come with me thither, for you I know are bid. Lucius, there's no huzzaing for your decemvirs now. Come on, we have outstaid the hour.

[*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*Virginius's House.*

Enter VIRGINIUS, ICILIUS, NUMITORIUS, LUCIUS, *and others.*

Virginius. Welcome, Icilius! Welcome, friends!—
I did design to speak with you of feasting [Icilius,
And merriment, but war is now the word;
One that unlovingly keeps time with mirth,

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Unless war's own—whene'er the battle's won,
And safe carousing, comrades drink to victory!
Icil. Virginius! have you changed your mind?
Virginius. My mind?
What mind? How now! Are you that boy, Icilius.
You set your heart so earnestly upon
A dish of poor confections, that to balk you
Makes you look blank! I did design to feast you
Together with your friends. The times are changed—
The march, the tent, the fight becomes us now!
Icil. Virginius!
Virginius. Well!
Icil. Virginius!
Virginius. How the boy
Reiterates my name.
Icil. There's not a hope
I have but is the client of Virginius.
Virginius. Well, well! I only meant to put it off!
We'll have the revel yet! the board shall smoke!
The cup shall sparkle, and the jest shall soar
And mock us from the roof! Will that content you?
Not till the war be done though—Yet, ere then,
Some tongue, that now needs only wag to make
The table ring, may have a tale to tell
So petrifying, that it cannot utter it!
I'll make all sure, that you may be my guest
At any rate—although you should be forced
To play the host for me and feast yourself.
Look here (*shows a parchment to* Icilius),
How think you? Will it meet the charge?
Will it not do? We want a witness though!
I'll bring one; whom if you approve, I'll sign
The bond. I'll wait upon you instantly. [*Goes out.*
Luc. How feel you now, Icilius?
Icil. Like a man
Whom the next moment makes, or quite unmakes.
With the intensity of exquisite
Suspense, my breathing thickens, and my heart
Beats heavily, and with remittant throb,
As like to lose its action—See! my hope
Is bless'd! I live! I live!

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Enter VIRGINIUS, *conducting* VIRGINIA, *with* NUMITORIUS.

Virginius. You are my witnesses,
That this young creature I present to you,
I do pronounce—my profitably cherish'd,
And most deservedly beloved child;
My daughter, truly filial—both in word
And act—yet even more in act than word:
And—for the man who seeks to win her love—
A virgin, from whose lips a soul as pure
Exhales, as e'er responded to the blessing
Breathed in a parent's kiss (*kissing her*). Icilius!

[ICILIUS *rushes towards* VIRGINIUS *and kneels.*]

Since
You are upon your knees, young man, look up;
And lift your hands to heaven—You will be all
Her father has been—added unto all
A lover would be!

Icil. All that man should be
To woman, I will be to her!

Virginius. The oath
Is register'd! Didst thou but know, young man,
How fondly I have watch'd her, since the day
Her mother died, and left me to a charge
Of double duty bound—how she hath been
My ponder'd thought by day, my dream by night,
My prayer, my vow, my offering, my praise,
My sweet companion, pupil, tutor, child!—
Thou wouldst not wonder, that my drowning eye,
And choking utterance, upbraid my tongue
That tells thee, she is thine!—Icilius,
I do betroth her to thee; let but the war
Be done—you shall espouse her. Friends, a word!

[VIRGINIUS *and the rest retire.*

Icil. Virginia! my Virginia! I am all
Dissolved—o'erpower'd with the munificence
Of this auspicious hour—And thou, nor movest—
Nor look'st—nor speak'st—to bless me with a sign
Of sweet according joy!—I love thee, but
To make thee happy! If to make thee so
Be bliss denied to me—lo, I release
The gifted hand—that I would faster hold,

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Than wretches, bound for death, would cling to life.
If thou wouldst take it back—then take it back.
Virginia. I take it back—to give it thee again!
Icil. O help me to a word will speak my bliss,
Or I am beggar'd—No! there is not one!
There cannot be; for never man had bliss
Like mine to name.
Virginia. Thou dost but beggar me,
Icilius, when thou makest thyself a bankrupt;
Placing a value on me far above
My real little worth.—I'd help thee to
A hundred words; each one of which would far
O'er-rate thy gain, and yet no single one
Rate over high!
Icil. Thou couldst not do it! No;
Thou couldst not do it! Every term of worth
Writ down and doubled, then the whole summ'd up,
Would leave with thee a rich remainder still!—
Pick from each rarer pattern of thy sex
Her rarest charm, till thou hast every charm
Of soul and body, that can blend in woman,
I would out-paragon the paragon
With thee!
Virginia. And if thou wouldst, I'd find thee, for
Thy paragon, a mate—if that can be
A mate which doth transcend the thing 'tis ta'en
To match—would make thy paragon look poor,
And I would call that so o'ermatching mate
Icilius.
Icil. No! I will not let thee win
On such a theme as this!
Virginia. Nor will I drop
The controversy, that the richer makes me
The more I lose.
Icil. My sweet Virginia,
We do but lose and lose, and win and win;
Playing for nothing but to lose and win.
Then let us stop the game—and thus I stop it.
(*Kisses her.*)

Re-enter VIRGINIUS, *and the others.*

Virginius. Witness, my friends, that seal! Observe, it is
A living one! It is Icilius' seal;

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And stamp'd upon as true and fair a bond—
Though it receive the impress blushingly—
As ever signet kiss'd! Are all content?
Speak else! She is thy free affianced wife,
Thou art her free affianced husband! Come,
We have o'erdrawn our time—Farewell, Virginia;
Thy future husband for a time must be
Bellona's. To thy tasks again, my child;
Be thou the bride of study for a time.
Farewell!

Virginia. My father!

Virginius. May the gods protect thee!

Virginia. My father!

Virginius. Does the blood forsake thy cheek?
Come to my arms once more! Remember, girl,
The first and foremost debt a Roman owes
Is to his country; and it must be paid,
If need be, with his life—Why, how you hold me!
Icilius, take her from me! Hoa! Within!
Within there! Servia! [*Enter* SERVIA.] Look to your child!
Come, boy.

Icil. Farewell, Virginia.

Virginius. Take her in!

Virginia. The gods be with thee, my Icilius! Father,
The gods be with thee—and Icilius.

Virginius. I swear a battle might be fought and won
In half the time! Now, once for all, farewell!
Your sword and buckler, boy! The foe! The foe!
Does he not tread on Roman ground! Come on!
Come on, charge on him! drive him back! or die!

[*They go out.*

SCENE III.—*Appius's House.*

Enter APPIUS.

It was a triumph, the achieving which
O'erpaid the risk was run—and that was great.
They have made trial of their strength, and learn'd

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Its value from defeat. The senate knows
Its masters now; and the decemvirate,
To make its reign eternal, only wants
Its own decree, which little pains will win.
Ere this, the foe has, for his mad invasion,
Been paid with chastisement. Retired within
His proper limits, leisure waits upon us
To help us to the recompense, decreed
To our noble daring, who have set ourselves
In such high seats, as at our feet array
The wealth, and power, and dignity of Rome
In absolute subjection! Tyranny!
How godlike is thy port! Thou givest, and takest,
And ask'st no other leave, than what thy own
Imperial will accords. Jove does no more!
Now Claudius—

Enter CLAUDIUS.

Claud. We have suffer'd a defeat!
App. What! The decemvirs fly!
Claud. The soldiers fight
With only half a heart. The other half
Looks on, and cares not which side proves the winner.
App. Then decimate them. Traitors! Recreants!
Why, we shall have them at our very doors!
Have we lost ground, my Claudius?
Claud. None, except
What we've retraced in fame. We strove to teach
The enemy their road lay backwards, but
They would not turn their faces for us. Each
Retains his former line.

Enter MARCUS.

App. What news?
Marc. The Œqui
Still press upon us. Rumours are afloat
Of new disasters, which the common cry,
Be sure, still multiplies and swells. Dentatus,
That over-busy, crabbed veteran,
Walks up and down among the people, making
Your plans his theme of laughter. Nought he stints
That may reflect you in an odious light,
And lower the decemvirate.

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App. A dungeon
Would do good service to him! Once within,
Strangling were easy! We must stop his mouth—
Unwholesome food—or liquor—Where was he
When last you heard him?

Marc. In the Forum.

App. So!
He is past service, is he not? Some way
To clear the city of him. Come, we'll hear him,
And answer him, and silence him! 'Tis well
The dog barks forth his spleen; it puts us on
Our guard against his bite. Come to the Forum!

[*They go out.*

SCENE IV.—*The Forum.*

Enter DENTATUS, *with* TITUS, SERVIUS, *and* Citizens.

Tit. What's to be done?

Den. We'll be undone—that's to be done.

Ser. We'll do away with the decemvirate.

Den. You'll do away with the decemvirate?—The decemvirate will do away with you! You'll do away with yourselves! Do nothing—The enemy will do away with both of you. In another month a Roman will be a stranger in Rome. A fine pass we are come to, masters!

Tit. But something must be done.

Den. Why, what would you have? You shout and clap your hands, as if it were a victory you heard of; and yet you cry—Something must be done! Truly, I know not what that something is, unless it be to make you General. How say you, masters?

Ser. We'd follow any man that knew how to lead us, and would rid us of our foes, and the decemvirate together.

Den. You made these decemvirs! You are strangely discontented with your own work! And you are over-cunning workmen too—You put your materials so firmly together, there's no such thing as taking them asunder! What you build, you build—except it be for

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your own good.—There you are bunglers at your craft. Ha! ha! ha! I cannot but laugh to think how you toiled, and strained, and sweated, to rear the stones of the building one above another, when I see the sorry faces you make at it!

Tit. But tell us the news again.

Den. Is it so good? Does it so please you? Then prick your ears again, and listen. We have been beaten again—beaten back on our own soil. Rome has seen its haughty masters fly before chastisement, like slaves —returning cries for blows—and all this of your decemvirs, gentlemen.

1*st Cit.* Huzza for it again! [*The people shout.*

2*nd Cit.* Hush! Appius comes.

Den. And do you care for that? You that were, just now, within a stride of taking him and his colleagues by the throat? You'll do away with the decemvirs, will you! And let but one of them appear, you dare not for your life but keep your spleen within your teeth! Listen to me, now! I'll speak the more for Appius—[*Enter* Appius, Claudius, *and* Marcus, *preceded by Lictors.*]—I say, to the eternal infamy of Rome, the foe has chased her sons, like hares, on their own soil, where they should prey like lions—and so they would, had they not keepers to tame them.

App. What's that you are saying to the people, Siccius Dentatus?

Den. I am regaling them with the news.

App. The news?

Den. Ay, the news—the newest that can be had; and the more novel because unlooked for. Who ever thought to see the eagle in the talons of the kite?

App. It is not well done in you, Dentatus, to chafe a sore. It makes it rankle. If your surgery has learned no better, it should keep its hands to itself! You have very little to do, to busy yourself after this fashion.

Den. I busy myself as I like, Appius Claudius.

App. I know you do, when you labour to spread disaffection among the people, and bring the decemvirs into contempt.

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Den. The decemvirs bring themselves into contempt.

App. Ha! dare you say so?

Den. Dare! I have dared cry "Come on!" to a cohort of bearded warriors—Is it thy smooth face should appal me? Dare! it never yet flurried me to use my arm—Shall I not, think you, be at my ease, when I but wag my tongue? Dare, indeed!

App. Your grey hairs should keep company with honester speech!

Den. Shall I show you, Appius, the company they are wont to keep? Look here! and here (*uncovering his forehead and showing scars*). These are the vouchers of honest deeds—such is the speech with which my grey hairs keep company. I tell you, to your teeth, the decemvirs bring themselves into contempt.

App. What, are they not serving their country at the head of her armies?

Den. They'd serve her better in the body of her armies! I'd name for thee a hundred centurions would make better generals. A common soldier of a year's active service would take his measures better. Generals! Our generals were wont to teach us how to win battles.—Tactics are changed—Your generals instruct us how to lose them.

App. Do you see my lictors?

Den. There are twelve of them.

App. What if I bid them seize thee?

Den. They'd blush to do it.

App. Why now, Dentatus, I begin to know you;
I fancied you a man that loved to vent
His causeless anger in an under breath,
And speak it in the ear—and only then
When there was safety! Such a one, you'll own,
Is dangerous; and to be trusted, as
A friend or foe, unworthy. But I see
You rail to faces. Have you not so much
Respect for Appius as to take him by
The hand, when he confesses you have some
Pretence to quarrel with his colleagues' plans,
And find fault with himself? Which yet, you'll own,

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May quite as well be kindly done, Dentatus,
As harshly. Had you only to myself
Declared your discontents, the more you had rail'd,
The more I should have thank'd you.
Den. Had I thought——
App. And have you been campaigning, then, so long,
And prosperously—and mistrust you, Siccius,
That a young scarless soldier, like myself,
Would listen to your tutoring? See, now,
How much you have mistaken me! Dentatus,
In a word—Can you assist the generals,
And will you?
Den. I have all the will—but as
For the ability——
App. Tut! Tut! Dentatus,
You vex me now. This coyness sits not well on you.
You know as well as I, you have as much
Ability as will. I would not think you
A man that loved to find fault, but to find fault!
Surely the evil you complain of, you
Would lend a hand to remedy! See, now,
'Tis fairly put to you—what say you?
Den. Appius!
You may use me as you please.
App. And that will be,
As you deserve. I'll send you, as my legate,
To the army [*Shouts from the people*]. Do you hear your friends, Dentatus?
A lucky omen, that! Away! Away!
Apprise your house—prepare for setting out.
I'll hurry your credentials. Minutes now
Rate high as hours! Assist my colleagues with
Your counsel; if their plans displease you, why
Correct them—change them—utterly reject them.
And if you meet obstruction, notice me,
And I will push it by. There, now! Your hand!
Again! Away! All the success attend you
That Appius wishes you!
Den. Success is from
The gods, whose hand soe'er it pleases them

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To send it by. I know not what success
'Tis Appius' wish they send; but this I know
I am a soldier; and, as a soldier, I
Am bound to serve. All the success I ask,
Is that which benefits my country, Appius.

[DENTATUS *goes out.*

App. You've served her overlong! [*Aside.*] Now for our causes.

[APPIUS *ascends the tribunal.*

Claud. [*to* MARCUS.] Do you see the drift of this?

Marc. I cannot guess it.

Claud. Nor I.

App. [*to a Plebeian.*] Are you the suitor in this cause?
Speak!

Plebeian. Noble Appius, if there's law in Rome,
To right a man most injured, to that law
Against yon proud patrician I appeal.

App. No more of that, I say! Because he's rich
And great, you call him proud! 'Tis not unlike
Because you're poor and mean, you call yourself
Injured. Relate your story; and, so please you,
Spare epithets.

Plebeian. Grant me a minute's pause.
I shall begin.

[VIRGINIA *at this moment crosses the stage with her Nurse, and is met by* NUMITORIUS, *who holds her in conversation:* APPIUS *rivets his eyes upon her.*]

Num. You have heard the news?

Virginia. What news, dear uncle?

Num. Step
Aside with me, I'll tell you.

[*Takes her a little farther from the tribunal.*

App. Can it be
A mortal that I look upon?

Virginia. They are safe!
I thank the gods!

App. Her eyes look up to heaven
Like something kindred to it—rather made

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To send their glances down, and fill the earth
With worship and with gratulation. What
A thrill runs up and down my veins, and all
Throughout me!
Plebeian. Now, most noble Appius—
App. Stop!
Put off the cause; I cannot hear it now.
Attend to-morrow. An oppressive closeness
Allows me not to breathe. Lictors! make clear
The ground about the rostrum!
[*Descends, and approaches* CLAUDIUS *with precipitation.*
Claudius! Claudius!—
Marcus, go you and summon my physician
To be at home before me [MARCUS *goes out.*] Clau-
Claudius! there! there! [dius!
Virginia. You send a messenger to-night?
App. Paint me that smile! I never saw a smile
Till now. My Claudius, is she not a wonder?
I know not whether in the state of girlhood
Or womanhood to call her. 'Twixt the two
She stands as that were loath to lose her, this
To win her most impatient. The young year
Trembling and blushing 'twixt the striving kisses
Of parting spring and meeting summer, seems
Her only parallel!
Num. 'Tis well! I'll send
Your father word of this. But have you not
A message to Icilius?
App. Mark you, Claudius?
There is a blush! I must possess her.
Virginia. Tell him,
I think upon him. Farewell, Numitorius!
[*Goes out with* SERVIA.
Num. Farewell, Virginia.
Claud. Master, will you tell me
The name of that young maiden?
Num. She is call'd
Virginia, daughter of Virginius;
A Roman citizen, and a centurion
In the army.

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Claud. Thank you; she is very like
The daughter of a friend of mine. Farewell.
Num. Farewell! [*Goes out.*
App. I burn, my Claudius! brain and heart—there's not
A fibre in my body but 's on fire!
With what a gait she moves! Such was not Hebe,
Or Jupiter had sooner lost his heaven,
Than changed his cup-bearer. A step like that
The rapture-glowing clouds might well bear up,
And never take for human! Find me, Claudius,
Some way to compass the possession of her.
Claud. 'Tis difficult—her father's of repute;
The highest of his class.
App. I guess'd it! Friends
Are ever friends, except when friends are needed.
Claud. Nay, Appius!
App. If thou canst not give me hope,
Be dumb!
Claud. A female agent may be used
With some success.
App. How? How?
Claud. To tamper with
That woman that attends her.
App. Set about it.
Claud. Could she but be induced to help you to
A single meeting with her.
App. Claudius! Claudius!
Effect but that!
Claud. I'll instantly about it.
App. Spare not my gold—nor stop at promises.
I will fulfil them fast as thou canst make them.
To purchase such a draught of ecstacy
I'd drain a kingdom—Set about it, Claudius!
Away! I will not eat, nor drink, nor sleep,
Until I hear from thee!
Claud. Depend upon me!
App. I do, my Claudius, for my life—my life!
[*They go out severally.*

END OF ACT II.

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ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Appius's House.*

APPIUS—(*Entering*).

It is not love, if what I've felt before
And call'd by such a name be love—a thing
That took its turn—that I could entertain,
Put off or humour—'tis some other thing;
Or if the same, why in some other state—
Or I am not the same—or it hath found
Some other part of sensibility
More quick, whereon to try its power, and there
Expends it all! Now, Claudius, your success?

Enter CLAUDIUS.

Claud. Nothing would do, yet nothing left undone!
She was not to be purchased.
App. Did she guess—
Claud. She could not.
So guarded was my agent; who described you
A man of power, of noble family,
And regal fortune—one that ask'd not what
His pleasures cost—no further made disclosure.
App. And did it nothing move her, Claudius?
Claud. Nothing.
The more my agent urged, the more the shrunk
And wither'd hag grew callous; further press'd
And with more urgent importuning, ire
And scorn in imprecations and invectives
Vented upon the monster (as she call'd him
That would pollute her child, compell'd my advocate
To drop the suit she saw was hopeless.
App. Now
Had I a friend indeed!
Claud. Has Appius need
To search for such a friend, and Claudius by him?
App. Friends ever are provisionally friends—
Friends for so far—Friends just to such a point,

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And then "farewell!" friends with an understanding—
As "should the road be pretty safe"—"the sea
Not over-rough," and so on—friends of *ifs*
And *buts*—no friends! O could I find the man
Would be a simple thorough-going friend!
Claud. I thought you had one, Appius.
App. So thought Appius,
Till Appius thought upon a test of friendship,
He fears he would not give unto himself,
Could he be Appius' friend.
Claud. Then Appius has
A truer friend than Appius is to Appius.
I'll give that test!
App. What! you'd remove her father
And that Icilius whom you told me of?
Claud. Count it as done.
App. My Claudius, is it true?
Can I believe it? Art thou such a friend,
That, when I look'd for thee to stop and leave me,
I find thee, keeping with me, step by step;
And even in thy loving eagerness
Outstriding me? I do not want thee, Claudius,
To soil thy hand with their plebeian blood.
Claud. What wouldst thou, then?
App. I was left guardian to thee—
Claud. Thou wast.
App. Among the various property
Thy father left were many female slaves.
Claud. Well?
App. It were easy for thee (were it not?)
To invent a tale that one of them confess'd
She had sold a female infant (and, of course,
Thy slave) unto Virginius' wife, who pass'd it upon
Virginius as his daughter, which
Supposititious offspring is this same
Virginia.
Claud. I conceive you.
App. To induce
The woman to confirm your tale would ask
But small persuasion. Is it done?

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Claud. This hour.
I know the school, my Appius, where Virginia
Pursues her studies; thither I'll repair,
And seize her as my slave at once. Do thou
Repair to thy tribunal, whither, should
Her friends molest me in the attempt, I'll bring her,
And plead my cause before thee.
App. Claudius! Claudius!
How shall I pay thee? O, thou noble friend!
Power, fortune, life, whate'er belongs to Appius,
Reckon as thine! Away, away, my Claudius!
[*They go out severally.*

SCENE II.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter LUCIUS, *meeting* TITUS, SERVIUS, *and* CNEIUS.

Luc. Well, masters, any news of Siccius Dentatus from the camp, how he was received by the decemvirs?

Tit. He was received well by the decemvirs.

Cne. It wasn't then for the love they bear him.

Tit. But they expect he'll help them to return the cuffs they have gotten from the enemy.

Ser. Do you wish for a victory?

Luc. Yes, if Dentatus wins it. 'Tis to our credit, masters—He's one of us.

Ser. And is not Spurius Oppius one of us?

Luc. He is; but he's in league with the patricians—that is, the patrician decemvirs. He is but half a plebeian, and that is the worst half. The better half he threw away when he became half a patrician. I never liked your half-and-half gentry; they generally combine the bad of both kinds, without the good of either.

Ser. Well, we shall have news presently. Your brother, Icilius, has just arrived with despatches from the camp. I met him passing through the Forum, and asked him what news he brought. He answered, none; but added, we might look for news of another kind than what we had been lately accustomed to hear. [*A shriek without.*

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Cne. What's that?

Tit. Look yonder, masters! See!

Ser. 'Tis Appius's client dragging a young woman along with him.

Tit. Let us stand by each other, masters, and prevent him.

Enter CLAUDIUS, *dragging along* VIRGINIA, *followed by* SERVIA *and others.*

Servia. Help! help! help!

Luc. Let go your hold!

Claud. Stand by!
She is my slave!

Servia. His slave? Help! help! His slave?—
He looks more like a slave than she! Good masters!
Protect the daughter of Virginius!

Luc. Release the maid.

Tit. Forbear this violence.

Claud. I call for the assistance of the laws;
She is my slave.

Servia. She is my daughter, masters,
My foster-daughter; and her mother was
A free-born woman—and her father is
A citizen, a Roman—good Virginius,
As I said before—Virginius, the centurion,
Whom all of you must know.—Help! help! I say.
You see she cannot speak to help herself;
Speak for her, masters—help her, if you're men!

Tit. Let go your hold.

Claud. Obstruct me at your peril.

Luc. We'll make you, if you will not.

Claud. Let me pass.

Ser. Let go your hold, once more.

Claud. Good masters! patience—
Hear me, I say—She is my slave—I wish not
To use this violence, my friends; but may not
A master seize upon his slave?—Make way,
Or such of you as are dissatisfied,
Repair with me to the decemvir.—Come,
I only want my right!

Tit. Come on then!

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Ser. Ay,
To the decemvir!
Servia. Run, run for Numitorius—alarm our neighbours!—Call out Icilius' friends!—I shall go mad! Help! help! help! [*They go out.*

SCENE III.—*The Forum.*

Enter APPIUS, *preceded by Lictors.*

App. Will he succeed?—Will he attempt it?—Will he
Go through with it?—[*Looking out*]—No sign—I almost wish
He had not undertaken it; yet wish,
More than I wish for life, he may accomplish
What he has undertaken. O! the pause
That precedes action! It is vacancy
That o'erweighs action's substance. What I fear
Is, that his courage can't withstand her tears,
That will be sure to try and succour her,
Pointing, as 'twere, to every charm, and pleading
With melting eloquence. I hear a sound
As of approaching clamour—and the rush
Of distant feet—He comes! I must prepare
For his reception.

[APPIUS *ascends the tribunal.*—CLAUDIUS *enters still holding* VIRGINIA, *followed by* SERVIA, *Women, and* Citizens.

Claud. Do not press upon me;
Here's the decemvir—he will satisfy you,
Whether a master has a right or not
To seize his slave when he finds her.
Servia. She is no slave
Of thine! She never was a slave! Thou slave!
To call her by that name—Ay! threaten me!
She is a free-born maid, and not a slave,
Or never was a free-born maid in Rome!
O! you shall dearly answer for it!
App. Peace!
What quarrel's this? Speak, those who are aggrieved.

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Enter NUMITORIUS.

Num. Where is Virginia—Wherefore do you hold
That maiden's hand?
Claud. Who asks the question?
Num. I! Her uncle Numitorius!
Claud. Numitorius, you think yourself her uncle—
Numitorius,
No blood of yours flows in her veins, to give you
The title you would claim. Most noble Appius!
If you sit here for justice, as I think
You do, attend not to the clamour of
This man, who calls himself this damsel's *uncle.*
She is my property—was born beneath
My father's roof, whose slave her mother was,
Who (as I can establish past dispute)
Sold her an infant to Virginius' wife,
Who never had a child, and heavily
Revolved her barrenness. My slave I have found
And seized—as who that finds his own (no matter
How long so ever miss'd) should fear to take it?
If they oppose my claim, they may produce
Their counter-proofs and bring the cause to trial!
But till they prove mine own is not mine own—
(An undertaking somewhat perilous)
Mine own I shall retain—yet giving them,
Should they demand it, what security
They please for re-producing her.
App. Why that
Would be but reasonable.
Num. Reasonable!
Claudius! [*with much vehemence—recollects himself.*]
He's but a mask upon the face
Of some more powerful contriver [*Aside.*] Appius,
My niece's father is from Rome, thou know'st,
Serving his country. Is it not unjust,
In the absence of a citizen, to suffer
His right to his own child to be disputed?
Grant us a day to fetch Virginius,
That he himself may answer this most foul
And novel suit—Meanwhile to me belongs
The custody of the maid—her uncle's house

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Can better answer for her honour than
The house of Claudius. 'Tis the law of Rome
Before a final sentence, the defendant
In his possession is not to sustain
Disturbance from the plaintiff.
Tit. A just law.
Ser. And a most reasonable demand.
All the Cits. Ay! Ay! Ay!
App. Silence, you citizens; will you restrain
Your tongues, and give your magistrate permission
To speak? The law is just—most reasonable—
I framed that law myself—I will protect
That law!
Tit. Most noble Appius!
Ser. A most just decree!
All the Cits. Ay! Ay!
App. Will you be silent? Will you please to wait
For my decree, you most untractable
And boisterous citizens! I do repeat it,
I framed that law myself, and will protect it.
But are you, Numitorius, here defendant?
That title none but the reputed father
Of the young woman has a right to—How
Can I commit to thee what may appear
The plaintiff's property: and if not his
Still is not thine? I'll give thee till to-morrow
Ere I pass a final judgment—But the girl
Remains with Claudius, who shall bind himself
In such security as you require,
To re-produce her at the claim of him
Who calls her daughter—This is my decree.
Num. A foul decree.—Shame! Shame!
Ser. Ay, a most foul decree.
Cne. A villanous decree.
Ser. Most villanous.
Servia. Good citizens, what do you with our weapons
When you should use your own? Your hands!—your hands!
He shall not take her from us.
Gather round her,

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And if he touch her, be it to his cost;
And if ye see him touch her, never more
Expect from us your titles—never more
Be husbands, brothers, lovers, at our mouths,
Or anything that doth imply the name
Of men—except such men as men should blush for.
App. Command your wives and daughters, citizens,
They quit the Forum.
Servia. They shall not command us,
That care not to protect us.
App. Take the girl,
If she is yours.
Claud. Stand by.
Virginia. O help me! help me!
Icil. [*entering*]. Virginia's voice!—Virginia!
[*Rushes to her.*
Virginia. O, Icilius! [*Falls fainting in his arms.*
Icil. Take her, good Numatorius.
App. You had better
Withdraw, Icilius; the affair is judged.
Claud. I claim my slave.
Icil. Stand back, thou double slave!
Touch her, and I will tear thee limb from limb,
Before thy master's face.—She is my wife,
My life, my heart, my heart's blood.—Touch her
With but a look——
App. My lictors, there, advance!
See that Icilius quits the Forum.—Claudius,
Secure your slave.
Icil. Lictors, a moment pause
For your own sakes. Do not mistake these arms;
Think not the strength of any common man
Is that they feel. They serve a charmed frame,
The which a power pervades, that ten times trebles
The natural energy of each single nerve
To sweep you down as reeds.
App. Obey my orders!
Icil. Appius! before I quit the Forum, let me
Address a word to you.
App. Be brief, then!
Icil. Is't not enough you have deprived us, Appius,

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Of the two strongest bulwarks to our liberties,
Our tribunes and our privilege of appeal
To the assembly of the people? Cannot
The honour of the Roman maids be safe?
Thou know'st this virgin is betroth'd to me,
Wife of my hope—Thou shalt not cross my hope
And I retain my life—attempt it not!
I stand among my fellow-citizens—
His fellow-soldiers hem Virginius round,
Both men and gods are on our side; but grant
I stood alone, with nought but virtuous love
To hearten me—alone would I defeat
The execution of thy infamous
Decree! I'll quit the Forum now, but not
Alone—my love! my wife! my free-born maid—
The virgin standard of my pride and manhood,
Of peerless motto! rich, and fresh, and shining,
And of device most rare and glorious,
I'll bear off safe with me—unstain'd—untouch'd!

App. Your duty, lictors—Claudius, look to your right.

Icil. True citizens!

Tit. Down with the traitor!

Ser. Down with him—slay him!

[*The Lictors and* CLAUDIUS *are driven back;* CLAUDIUS *takes refuge at* APPIUS'S *feet, who has descended and throws up his arms as a signal to both parties to desist—whereupon the people retire a little.*

App. So, friends! we thank you that you don't deprive us
Of everything; but leave your magistrates,
At least their persons sacred—their decrees,
It seems, you value as you value straws,
And in like manner break them. Wherefore stop
When you have gone so far? You might, methinks,
As well have kill'd my client at my feet,
As threaten'd him with death before my face!
Rise, Claudius! I perceive Icilius' aim:—
He labours to restore the tribuneship
By means of a sedition. We'll not give him

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The least pretence of quarrel. We shall wait
Virginius's arrival till to-morrow.
His friends take care to notice him—The camp's
But four hours' journey from the city. 'Till
To-morrow, then, let me prevail with you
To yield up something of your right, and let
The girl remain at liberty.

Claud. If they
Produce security for her appearance,
I am content.

Tit. I'll be your security.

Ser. And I.

Cit. We'll all be your security.

[*They hold up their hands.*

Icil. My friends,
And fellow-citizens, I thank you; but
Reserve your kindness for to-morrow, friends,
If Claudius still persist—To-day I hope
He will remain content with my security,
And that of Numitorius, for the maid's
Appearance.

App. See she do appear!—and come
Prepared to pay the laws more reverence,
As I shall surely see that they receive it.

[Appius, Claudius, *and Lictors go out.*

Icil. Look up! look up! my sweet Virginia,
Look up! look up! you will see none but friends.
O that such eyes should e'er meet other prospect!

Virginia. Icilius! Uncle! lead me home! Icilius,
You did not think to take a slave to wife?

Icil. I thought, and think to wed a free-born maid;
And thou, and thou alone, art she, Virginia!

Virginia. I feel as I were so—I do not think
I am his slave! Virginius not my father!
Virginius, my dear father, not my father!
It cannot be; my life must come from him;
For, make him not my father, it will go
From me.—I could not live an he were not
My father.

Icil. Dear Virginia, calm thy thoughts—
But who shall warn Virginius?

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Num. I've ta'en care
Of that; no sooner heard I of this claim,
Than I despatch'd thy brother Lucius,
Together with my son, to bring Virginius,
With all the speed they could; and cautioned them
(As he is something over-quick of temper,
And might snatch justice, rather than sue for it)
To evade communication of the cause,
And merely say his presence was required,
'Till we should have him with us. Come, Virginia;
Thy uncle's house shall guard thee, till thou find'st
Within thy father's arms a citadel,
Whence Claudius cannot take thee.

Icil. He shall take
A thousand lives first.

Tit. Ay, ten thousand lives.

Icil. Hear you, Virginia! Do you hear your friends?

Virginia. Let him take my life first, I am content
To be his slave then—if I am his slave.

Icil. Thou art a free-born Roman maid, Virginia;
All Rome doth know thee so, Virginia—
All Rome will see thee so.

Cit. We will! We will!

Icil. You'll meet us here to-morrow?

Cit. All! all!

Icil. Cease not to clamour 'gainst this outrage. Tell it
In every corner of the city; and
Let no man call himself a son of Rome,
Who stands aloof when tyranny assails
Her fairest daughter. Come, Virginia,
'Tis not a private, but a common wrong;
'Tis every father's, lover's, freeman's cause;
To-morrow! fellow-citizens, to-morrow!

Cit. To-morrow!

[*They go out severally.*

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SCENE IV.—*The Camp.*

Enter S. Oppius *and* Q. F. Vibulanus.

Opp. Has he set out?
Vibul. He has, my Oppius,
And never to return! His guard's instructed
To take good care of him. There's not a man
But's ten times sold to us, and of our wishes
Fully possess'd. Dentatus will no more
Obstruct us in our plans. He did not like
The site of our encampment. He will find
At least the air of it was wholesome.
Opp. What
Report are they instructed to bring back?
Vibul. They fell into an ambush—He was slain.
Opp. But should the truth, by any means, come out?
Vibul. Imprison them, and secretly despatch them,
Or ope the dungeon doors, and let them 'scape.
Opp. I should prefer the latter method.
Vibul. Well,
That be our choice. But when it is determined
To spill blood otherwise than as it may
Be spill'd, to hesitate about some drops
Is weakness, may be fatal.—Come, my friend,
Let us be seen about the camp, and ready,
With most admiring ear, to catch the tidings,
Will be the wonder of all ears, but ours.
Here's one anticipates us!

Enter Marcus.

Well, your news?

Marc. Dentatus is no more! but he has dearly sold his life. The matter has been reported as you directed. By few it is received with credence—by many with doubt; while some bold spirits stop not at muttering, but loudly speak suspicion of foul play. A party that we met, a mile beyond the lines, no sooner heard our story, than they set off to bring the body to the camp. Others have followed them. Fabius, we have your gage for safety.

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Vibul. You have.—Come, let us show ourselves.—
Guilt hides,
And we must wear the port of innocence,
That more than half way meets accusal.—Come.
[*They go out.*

SCENE V.—*A Mountainous Pass.*

The body of Dentatus discovered on a bier—Soldiers mourning over it.

Trumpets—Enter VIRGINIUS *and* Soldiers.

Virginius. Where is Dentatus? Where is the gallant soldier?
Ah, Comrade! comrade! warm! yet warm! So lately
Gone, when I would have given the world, only
To say farewell to thee, or even get
A parting look! O gallant, gallant soldier,
The god of war might sure have spared a head
Grown grey in serving him! My brave old comrade!
The father of the field! Thy silver locks
Other anointing should receive, than what
Their master's blood could furnish!

1*st Soldier.* There has been treachery here!

Virginius. What!

1*st Soldier.* The slain are all our own. None of the bodies are stripp'd—These are all Romans. There is not the slightest trace of an enemy's retreat—And now I remember they made a sudden halt, when we came in sight of them at the foot of the mountain—Mark'd you not, too, with what confused haste they told their story, directed us, and hurried on to the camp?

Virginius. Revenge! The decemvirs! Ay, the decemvirs!
For every drop of blood thou shalt have ten,
Dentatus!

Luc. [*without*]. What, hoa! Virginius! Virginius!

Virginius. Here! here!

Luc. [*entering*]. 'Tis well you're found, Virginius!

Virginius. What makes you from the city? Look!
My Lucius, what a sight you've come to witness!

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My brave old comrade! Honest Siccius!
Siccius Dentatus, that true son of Rome,
On whose white locks the mother look'd more proudly
Than on the raven ones of her youngest and
Most hopeful sons, is nothing now but this,
The sign and token of himself! Look, comrades,
Here are the foes have slain him! Not a trace
Of any other—not a body stripp'd—
Our father has been murder'd—We'll revenge him
Like sons! Take up the body! Bear it to
The camp; and as you move your solemn march,
Be dumb—or, if you speak, be it but a word,
And be that word—Revenge!

[*The* Soldiers *bear off the body*—VIRGINIUS *following, is stopped by* LUCIUS.]

Luc. Virginius!
Virginius. I did not mind thee, Lucius!
Uncommon things make common things forgot.
Hast thou a message for me, Lucius? Well,
I'll stay and hear it—but be brief; my heart
Follows my poor Dentatus.
Luc. You are wanted
In Rome.
Virginius. On what account?
Luc. On your arrival
You'll learn.
Virginius. How! is it something can't be told
At once? Speak out, boy! Ha! your looks are loaded
With matter—Is't so heavy that your tongue
Cannot unburthen them? Your brother left
The camp on duty yesterday—hath aught
Happen'd to him? Did he arrive in safety?
Is he safe? Is he well?
Luc. He is both safe and well.
Virginius. What then? What then? Tell me the matter, Lucius.
Luc. I have said
It shall be told you.
Virginius. Shall! I stay not for
That "shall," unless it be so close at hand

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It stop me not a moment.—'Tis too long
A coming. Fare you well, my Lucius.
Luc. Stay,
Virginius; hear me then with patience.
Virginius. Well,
I am patient.
Luc. Your Virginia——
Virginius. Stop, my Lucius!
I'm cold in every member of my frame!
If 'tis prophetic, Lucius, of thy news,
Give me such token as her tomb would, Lucius—
I'll bear it better—Silence.
Luc. You are still——
Virginius. I thank thee, Jupiter! I am still a father!
Luc. You are, Virginius, yet.
Virginius. What, is she sick?
Luc. No.
Virginius. Neither dead nor sick! All well! No harm!
Nothing amiss! Each guarded quarter safe,
That fear may lay him down and sleep, and yet
This sounding the alarm! I swear thou tell'st
A story strangely. Out with't! I have patience
For anything, since my Virginia lives,
And lives in health!
Luc. You are required in Rome,
To answer a most novel suit.
Virginius. Whose suit?
Luc. The suit of Claudius.
Virginius. Claudius!
Luc. Him that's client
To Appius Claudius, the decemvir.
Virginius. What!
That pander! Ha! Virginia! you appear
To couple them. What makes my fair Virginia
In company with Claudius! Innocence
Beside lasciviousness! His suit! What suit?—
Answer me quickly!—Quickly! lest suspense,
Beyond what patience can endure, coercing,
Drive reason from his seat!
Luc. He has claim'd Virginia.

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Virginius. Claim'd her! Claim'd her!
On what pretence?
Luc. He says she is the child
Of a slave of his, who sold her to thy wife.
Virginius. Go on, you see I'm calm.
Luc. He seized her in
The school, and dragg'd her to the Forum, where
Appius was giving judgment.
Virginius. Dragg'd her to
The Forum! Well! I told you, Lucius,
I would be patient.
Luc. Numitorius there
Confronted him.
Virginius. Did he not strike him dead?
True, true, I know it was in presence of
The decemvir. O! had I confronted him!
Well! well! the issue? Well! o'erleap all else,
And light upon the issue. Where is she?
Luc. I was despatch'd to fetch thee, ere I could learn.
Virginius. The claim of Claudius, Appius' client—
I see the master cloud—this ragged one, [Ha!
That lowers before, moves only in subservience
To the ascendant of the other—Jove
With its own mischief break it and disperse it,
And that be all the ruin! Patience! Prudence!
Nay, prudence, but no patience. Come! a slave
Dragg'd through the streets in open day! my child!
My daughter! my fair daughter, in the eyes
Of Rome! O! I'll be patient. Come! The essence
Of my best blood in the free common ear
Condemn'd as vile! O! I'll be patient. Come!
O! they shall wonder—I will be so patient.
[VIRGINIUS *rushes out, followed by* LUCIUS.

END OF ACT III.

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ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Numitorius's House.*

VIRGINIA *discovered, supported by* SERVIA.

Virginia. Is he not yet arrived? Will he not come?
Servia. He surely will.
Virginia. He surely will! More surely
He had arrived already, had he known
How he is wanted—They have miss'd him, Servia!
Don't tell me, but I know they have, or surely
We had not now been looking for him. Where's
My uncle?
Servia. Finding you had fallen asleep
After such watching, he went forth to hear
If there were any tidings of Virginius.
He's here.

Enter NUMITORIUS; *Virginia looks at him inquisitively for some time*

Virginia. Not come! not come! I am sure of it!
He will not come! Do you not think he'll come?
Will not my father come? What think you, uncle?
Speak to me, speak—O give me any words,
Rather than what looks utter!
Num. Be composed!
I hope he'll come!
Virginia. A little while ago
You were sure of it—from certainty to hope
Is a poor step. You hope he'll come—One hope,
One little hope to face a thousand fears!
Do you not know he'll come? O uncle, wherefore
Do you not know he'll come? Had I been you,
I had made sure of it.
Num. All has been done
That could be done.
Virginia. Poor all that does so little!
One would imagine little needs be done

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To bring a father to the succour of
His child! 'Tis near the time!
Num. It is indeed!
Virginia. Must I go forth with you? Must I again
Be dragg'd along by Claudius as his slave,
And none again to succour me? Icilius!
Icilius! Does your true betrothed wife
Call on you, and you hear not? My Icilius!
Am I to be your wife, or Claudius' slave?
Where—where are you, Icilius?

ICILIUS *(entering).*

My Virginia!
What's to be done, my friend? 'tis almost time.
[*To* NUMITORIUS.
Virginia. I hear what you are saying—it is time—
O, who could have believed it, that Icilius
Should ever say 'twas time to yield me to
Another's claim—And will you give me up?
Can you devise no means to keep me from him?
Could we not fly?
[ICILIUS *looks earnestly at* NUMITORIUS, *who fixes his eyes steadfastly on the ground:* ICILIUS *droops his head.*
I see!—your pledge
Must be redeem'd, although it cost you your
Virginia.
Virginius (*without*). Is she here?
Virginia. Ah!
[*Shrieks and rushes into her father's arms, who enters at the moment.*
Virginius. My child! My child!
Virginia. I am! I feel I am! I know I am!
My father! my dear father. I despair'd
Of seeing you! You're come! and come in time.
And, O! how much the more in time, when hope
Had given you up. O! welcome, welcome foot,
Whose wished step is heard when least expected!
Virginius. Brother! Icilius! thank you! thank you
Has been communicated to me. Ay! [—All
And would they take thee from me? Let them try it!

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You've ta'en your measures well—I scarce could pass
Along, so was I check'd by loving hands
Ready to serve me. Hands with hearts in them!
So thou art Claudius' slave? And if thou art,
I'm surely not thy father! Blister'd villain!
You have warn'd our neighbours, have you not, to attend
As witnesses? To be sure you have. A fool
To ask the question. Dragg'd along the streets too!
'Twas very kind in him to go himself
And fetch thee—such an honour should not pass
Without acknowledgment. I shall return it
In full! In full!

Num. Pray you be prudent, brother.

Virginia. Dear father, be advised—Will you not, father?

Virginius. I never saw you look so like your mother
In all my life!

Virginia. You'll be advised, dear father?

Virginius. It was her soul—her soul, that play'd just then
About the features of her child, and lit them
Into the likeness of her own. When first
She placed thee in my arms—I recollect it
As a thing of yesterday!—she wish'd, she said,
That it had been a man. I answer'd her,
It was the mother of a race of men,
And paid her for thee with a kiss. Her lips
Are cold now—could they but be warm'd again,
How they would clamour for thee!

Virginia. My dear father!
You do not answer me! Will you not be advised?

Virginius. I will not take him by the throat and strangle him!
But I could do it! I could do it! Fear not:
I will not strike while any head I love
Is in the way. It is not now a time
To tell thee—but, wouldst thou believe it!—honest
Siccius Dentatus has been murder'd by them.

Icil. Murder'd!

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Num. Dentatus murder'd!
Virginia. O! how much
Have we to fear.
Virginius. We have the less to fear.
I spread the news at every step—A fire
Is kindled, that will blaze at but a breath
Into the fiercest flame!
Num. 'Tis time. Let's haste
To the Forum.
Virginius. Let the Forum wait for us!
Put on no show of fear, when villany
Would wrestle with you! It can keep its feet
Only with cowards! I shall walk along
Slowly and calmly, with my daughter thus
In my hand: though with another kind of gripe
Than that which Claudius gave her. Well, I say,
I'll walk along thus, in the eyes of Rome.
Go you before, and what appeal soe'er
You please, make you to rouse up friends. For me,
I shall be mute—my eloquence is here—
Her tears—her youth—her innocence—her beauty!
If orators like these can't move the heart,
Tongues surely may be dumb.
Icilius. A thousand hearts
Have spoke already in her cause!
Virginius. Come on!
Fear not! it is your father's grasp you feel.
O he'll be strong as never man was, that
Will take thee from it. Come, Virginia;
We trust our cause to Rome and to the gods!

[*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*The Forum.*

Enter APPIUS *and Lictors.*

App. See you keep back the people! Use your fasces
With firmer hands, or hearts. Your hands are firm
Enough, would but your hearts perform their office,
And leave your hands at liberty, not hang

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Upon them with unseemly fears and clamours!
Look to it! Time! hadst thou the theme that I have
For speed, thou wouldst not move this cripple's gait:
But there's no urging thee, and thou wast ever
Dull fellow-traveller to young Impatience,
Dragging him back upon the road he pants
To run, but cannot find without thee.

[*Enter* MARCUS.

Well?

Marc. News has arrived, that speaks as if Dentatus
Was murder'd by the order of your colleagues!
There's not a face I meet but lowers with it:
The streets are fill'd with thronging groups, that, as
You pass, grow silent, and look sullen round on you,
Then fall again to converse.

App. 'Tis ill timed.

Marc. What say you, Appius?

App. Murder's ill timed, I say,
Happen when 'twill; but now is most ill timed,
When Rome is in a ferment, on account
Of Claudius, and this girl he calls his slave;
For come when evil will, or how it will,
All's laid to our account! Look out and see
If Claudius be approaching yet. [MARCUS *goes out.*
My wish,
Like an officious friend, comes out of time
To tell me of success. I had rather far
It had miscarried—they run high enough;
They wanted not this squall on squall to raise them
Above their present swell—the waves run high
Enough, through which we steer—but such a haven,
If won, can never be too dearly won!

Marc. [*entering*]. Claudius is here!

Enter CLAUDIUS.

App. Well, Claudius, are the forces
At hand?

Claud. They are, and timely too; the people
Are in unwonted ferment.

App. I have heard
Word has arrived of old Dentatus' death;

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Which, as I hear, and wonder not to hear it,
The mutinous citizens lay to our account.
Claud. That's bad enough; yet—
App. Ha! what's worse?
Claud. 'Tis best
At once to speak what you must learn at last,
Yet last of all would learn.
App. Virginius!
Claud. Yes!
He has arrived in Rome.
Marc. They are coming, Appius.
Claud. Fly, Marcus, hurry down the forces! [MARCUS *goes out.*] Appius,
Be not o'erwhelm'd!
App. There's something awes me at
The thought of looking on her father!
Claud. Look
Upon her, my Appius! Fix your gaze upon
The treasures of her beauty, nor avert it
Till they are thine. Haste! Your tribunal! Haste!
[APPIUS *ascends his tribunal.*

Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, LUCIUS, *Citizens*, VIRGINIUS *leading his Daughter*, SERVIA, *and Citizens.—A dead silence prevails.*

Virginius. Does no one speak? I am defendant here.
Is silence my opponent? Fit opponent
To plead a cause too foul for speech! What brow
Shameless gives front to this most valiant cause,
That tries its prowess 'gainst the honour of
A girl, yet lacks the wit to know, that they
Who cast off shame should likewise cast off fear—
And on the verge o' the combat wants the nerve
To stammer forth the signal?
App. You had better,
Virginius, wear another kind of carriage:
This is not of the fashion that will serve you.
Virginius. The fashion, Appius! Appius Claudius, tell me
The fashion it becomes a man to speak in,
Whose property in his own child—the offspring

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Of his own body, near to him as is
His hand, his arm—yea, nearer—closer far,
Knit to his heart—I say, who has his property
In such a thing, the very self of himself,
Disputed—and I'll speak so, Appius Claudius;
I'll speak so—Pray you tutor me!
App. Stand forth,
Claudius! If you lay claim to any interest
In the question now before us, speak; if not,
Bring on some other cause.
Claud. Most noble Appius—
Virginius. And are you the man
That claims my daughter for his slave?—Look at me,
And I will give her to thee.
Claud. She is mine, then:
Do I not look at you?
Virginius. Your eye does, truly,
But not your soul.—I see it through your eye
Shifting and shrinking—turning every way
To shun me. You surprise me, that your eye,
So long the bully of its master, knows not
To put a proper face upon a lie,
But gives the port of impudence to falsehood,
When it would pass it off for truth. Your soul
Dares as soon show its face to me.—Go on,
I had forgot; the fashion of my speech
May not please Appius Claudius.
Claud. I demand
Protection of the decemvir!
App. You shall have it.
Virginius. Doubtless!
App. Keep back the people, lictors! What's
Your plea? You say the girl's your slave—Produce
Your proofs.
Claud. My proof is here, which, if they can,
Let them confront. The mother of the girl—
[VIRGINIUS, *stepping forward to speak, is withheld by* NUMITORIUS.
Num. Hold, brother! Hear them out, or suffer me
To speak.
Virginius. Man, I must speak, or else go mad!

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And if I do go mad, what then will hold me
From speaking? Wer't not better, brother, think you,
To speak and not go mad, than to go mad
And then to speak? She was thy sister, too!
Well, well, speak thou.—I'll try, and, if I can,
Be silent. (*Retires.*)

Num. Will she swear she is her child?

Virginius (*starting forward*). To be sure she will!
—a most wise question that!
Is she not his slave! Will his tongue lie for him –
Or his hand steal—or the finger of his hand
Beckon, or point, or shut, or open for him?
To ask him if she'll swear—Will she walk or run,
Sing, dance, or wag her head; do any thing
That is most easy done? She'll as soon swear:
What mockery it is to have one's life
In jeopardy by such a barefaced trick!
Is it to be endured? I do protest
Against her oath!

App. No law in Rome, Virginius,
Seconds you. If she swear the girl's her child,
The evidence is good, unless confronted
By better evidence. Look you to that,
Virginius. I shall take the woman's oath.

Virginia. Icilius!

Icil. Fear not, love; a thousand oaths
Will answer her.

App. You swear the girl's your child,
And that you sold her to Virginius' wife,
Who pass'd her for her own. Is that your oath?

Slave. It is my oath.

App. Your answer now, Virginius.

Virginius. Here it is!

[*Brings* VIRGINIA *forward.*

Is this the daughter of a slave? I know
'Tis not with men, as shrubs and trees, that by
The shoot you know the rank and order of
The stem. Yet who from such a stem would look
For such a shoot? My witnesses are these—
The relatives and friends of Numitoria,
Who saw her, ere Virginia's birth, sustain

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The burden which a mother bears, nor feels
The weight, with longing for the sight of it.
Here are the ears that listen'd to her sighs
In nature's hour of labour, which subsides
In the embrace of joy—the hands, that when
The day first look'd upon the infant's face,
And never look'd so pleased, help'd them up to it,
And bless'd her for a blessing—Here, the eyes
That saw her lying at the generous
And sympathetic fount, that at her cry
Sent forth a stream of liquid living pearl
To cherish her enamell'd veins. The lie
Is most unfruitful then, that takes the flower—
The very flower our bed connubial grew—
To prove its barrenness! Speak for me, friends;
Have I not spoke the truth?

Women and Citizens. You have, Virginius.

App. Silence! keep silence there! No more of that!
You're very ready for a tumult, citizens.
[*Troops appear behind.*
Lictors, make way to let these troops advance.
We've had a taste of your forbearance, masters,
And wish not for another.

Virginius. Troops in the Forum!

App. Virginius, have you spoken?

Virginius. If you have heard me,
I have: if not, I'll speak again.

App. You need not,
Virginius; I have evidence to give,
Which, should you speak a hundred times again,
Would make your pleading vain.

Virginius. Your hand, Virginia!
Stand close to me. [*Aside.*

App. My conscience will not let me
Be silent. 'Tis notorious to you all,
That Claudius' father, at his death, declared me
The guardian of his son. This cheat has long
Been known to me. I know the girl is not
Virginius' daughter.

Virginius. Join your friends, Icilius,
And leave Virginia to my care. [*Aside.*

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App. The justice
I should have done my client unrequired,
Now cited by him, how shall I refuse?
Virginius. Don't tremble, girl! don't tremble. [*Aside.*
App. Virginius,
I feel for you; but, though you were my father,
The majesty of justice should be sacred—
Claudius must take Virginia home with him.
Virginius. And if he must, I should advise him, Ap-
To take her home in time, before his guardian [pius,
Complete the violation, which his eyes
Already have begun—Friends! Fellow-citizens!
Look not on Claudius; look on your decemvir!
He is the master claims Virginia!
The tongues that told him she was not my child
Are these—the costly charms he cannot purchase,
Except by making her the slave of Claudius,
His client, his purveyor, that caters for
His pleasures—markets for him—picks, and scents,
And tastes, that he may banquet—serves him up
His sensual feast, and is not now ashamed,
In the open, common street, before your eyes—
Frighting your daughters' and your matrons' cheeks
With blushes they ne'er thought to meet—to help him
To the honour of a Roman maid! my child!
Who now clings to me, as you see, as if
This second Tarquin had already coil'd
His arms around her. Look upon her, Romans!
Befriend her! succour her! see her not polluted
Before her father's eyes!—He is but one!
Tear her from Appius and his lictors, while
She is unstain'd. Your hands! your hands! your hands!
Cit. They're yours, Virginius.
App. Keep the people back!
Support my lictors, soldiers! Seize the girl,
And drive the people back.
Icil. Down with the slaves!
[*The people make a show of resistance, but, upon the advancing of the soldiers, retreat, and leave* ICILIUS, VIRGINIUS, *and his daughter, &c., in the hands of* APPIUS *and his party.*]

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Deserted!—Cowards! Traitors! Let me free
But for a moment! I relied on you;
Had I relied upon myself alone,
I had kept them still at bay! I kneel to you—
Let me but loose a moment, if 'tis only
To rush upon your swords?

Virginius. Icilius, peace!
You see how 'tis, we are deserted, left
Alone by our friends, surrounded by our enemies,
Nerveless and helpless*.

App. Separate them, lictors!

Virginius. Let them forbear awhile, I pray you, Appius:
It is not very easy. Though her arms
Are tender, yet the hold is strong, by which
She grasps me, Appius. Forcing them will hurt them.
They'll soon unclasp themselves. Wait but a little:
You know you're sure of her!

App. I have not time
To idle with thee; give her to my lictors.

Virginius. Appius, I pray you, wait! If she is not
My child, she hath been like a child to me
For fifteen years. If I am not her father,
I have been like a father to her, Appius,
For even such a time. They that have lived
So long a time together, in so near
And dear society, may be allow'd
A little time for parting. Let me take
The maid aside, I pray you, and confer
A moment with her nurse; perhaps she'll give me
Some token, will unloose a tie, so twined
And knotted round my heart, that if you break it,
My heart breaks with it.

App. Have your wish. Be brief!
Lictors! look to them.

Virginia. Do you go from me!
Do you leave! Father! Father!

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* *Appius.* Away with him!
Icilius. Virginia! Tyrant! My Virginia!
Appius. Away with him, &c. [Icilius *is borne off.*

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Virginius. No, my child ;
No, my Virginia—come along with me.
Virginia. Will you not leave me? Will you take me with you ?
Will you take me home again? O, bless you, bless you !
My father ! my dear father ! Art thou not
My father ?
[VIRGINIUS, *perfectly at a loss what to do, looks anxiously around the Forum ; at length his eye falls on a butcher's stall with a knife upon it.*
Virginius. This way, my child—No, no ! I am not going
To leave thee, my Virginia ! I'll not leave thee.
App. Keep back the people, soldiers ! Let them not
Approach Virginius ! Keep the people back !
[VIRGINIUS *secures the knife.*
Well, have you done ?
Virginius. Short time for converse, Appius ;
But I have.
App. I hope you are satisfied.
Virginius. I am—
I am—that she is my daughter !
App. Take her, lictors !
[VIRGINIA *shrieks, and falls half dead upon her father's shoulder.*
Virginius. Another moment, pray you. Bear with me
A little—'Tis my last embrace. 'Twont try
Your patience beyond bearing, if you're a man !
Lengthen it as I may, I cannot make it
Long ! My dear child ! My dear Virginia !
[*Kissing her.*
There is one only way to save thine honour—
'Tis this !—
[*Stabs her and draws out the knife.* ICILIUS *breaks from the Soldiers that held him, and catches her.*
Lo ! Appius ! with this innocent blood,
I do devote thee to th' infernal gods !
Make way there !

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App. Stop him! Seize him!
Virginius. If they dare
To tempt the desperate weapon, that is madden'd
With drinking my daughter's blood, why let them: thus
It rushes in amongst them. Way there! Way!
[*Goes out through the Soldiers.*

Enter HONORIUS *and* VALERIUS.

Hon. What tumult's this? ———
The fair Virginia
Kill'd by her father's hand, to save her from
The lust of Appius Claudius? Most foul cause,
That makes so dark a deed look fair!
App. Remove
The body, lictors.
Icil. At the peril of
Their lives! Death is abroad, at work, and most
In earnest when with such a feat as this
He opens his exploits!
App. Obey me, slaves!
Hon. Defend the body, freemen. There's a spark
Remaining still, which, though not strong enough
To light it up with its own beauteous life,
May yet rekindle liberty, and save
Expiring Rome!
Cit. It shall not be removed!
App. Seize it, I say!
Val. Back, slaves! Give place to freemen!

[*A tumult ensues; the people deprive the Lictors of their fasces, and drive them, with the Soldiers, with* APPIUS CLAUDIUS, *&c., off the stage, then return shouting.*

Icil. Ay, shout, and shout: a far more glorious cause
Call'd for your voices, and you had not then
The breath to whisper. How that ear had thank'd you,
Had you as tender been of the jewel of
Its precious sense as of the empty casket!
Hon. A litter, citizens, to lift the body,
And bear it through the streets; the spectacle
Will fill all eyes with tears, all hearts with fire!

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Icil. No hand but mine shall touch it: I will be
Its living bier.
Hon. Icilius, listen to me!
Thou art not now thyself, and knowest not
There is a sweeter strain than that of grief—
Revenge, that drowns it. Suffer us to bear
Thy bride along the streets; a second, but
Unstain'd Lucretia, buying with her blood
The life of Rome and freedom!
Icil. Rome and freedom!
There is your ransom! such a costly one—
O, you are dear, to be so dearly won!
[*They go out.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter APPIUS *and* MARCUS.

App. I do abjure all further league with them:
They have most basely yielded up their power,
And compromised their glory. Had they died
In their high seats, they had lived demi-gods;
But now they live to die like basest men!
Power gone, life follows! Well! 'tis well we know
The worst! The worst?—The worst is yet to come;
And, if I err not, hither speeds a messenger
Whose heel it treads upon.

Enter VIBULANUS, *hastily, and other Decemvirs, with* MARCUS.

Vibul. Honorius and Valerius are elected
To the consulate.—Virginius is made tribune.
App. No doubt they'd fill their offices, when ours
Were laid so poorly down. You have acted wisely!

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Vibul. Who could resist Virginius, raving at
The head of the revolted troops, with all
The commons up in arms? Waste not dear time!
Look to your safety, Appius. 'Tis resolved
To cite you instantly before the consuls.
App. Look to my safety, say you? You would bid
A man, that's tumbling from a precipice
A hundred fathoms high, and midway down,
Look to his safety! What has he to snatch at?
Air!—E'en so much have I.
Vibul. Withdraw awhile
From Rome. We shall recall you with applause
And honours.
App. Yes! You saw me on the brink—
Beheld it giving way beneath my feet—
And saw me tottering o'er the hideous leap,
Whose sight sent round the brain with madd'ning whirl,
With but a twig to stay me, which you cut,
Because it was your friend that hung by it—
Most kindly.
Vibul. Nay, employ the present time
In looking to your safety—that secured,
Reproach us as you will.
App. I am in your hands,
Lead me which way you please.
Icil. (*without*). Hold! Stand!

Icilius *enters, with* Honorius *and* Valerius *as Consuls,* Numitorius *and Lictors.*

Did I not tell you 'twas the tyrant? Look,
Was I not right? I felt that he was present
Ere mine eye told it me.—You are our prisoner.
App. On what pretence, Icilius?
Icil. Ask of poor
Virginius, tottering between despair
And madness, as he seeks the home, where once
He found a daughter!
App. I demand due time
To make up my defence.
Icil. Demand due time!
Appius!—Assign the cause, why you denied

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A Roman maid, of free condition,
Her liberty provisionally, while
Her plea remain'd unjudged. No answer, Appius?
Lictors, lay hold upon him—to prison with him!
Look to him well. To prison with the tyrant!

[APPIUS *and Lictors go out on one side;* ICILIUS *and* NUMITORIUS *on the other.*

Vibul. Let all his friends, that their own safety prize,
Solicit straight for his enlargement; doff
Their marks of station, and to the vulgar eye
Disguise it with the garb of mourning; 'twill
Conciliate the crowd. We know them well:
But humour them, they are water soon as fire!

[*They go out severally.*

SCENE II.—*Virginius's House.*

Enter LUCIUS *and* SERVIA.

Luc. Is he not yet come home?
Servia. Not since her death.
I dread his coming home, good Lucius.
Luc. A step! 'Tis Numitorius and Virginius.
Servia. Gods! how he looks!—See, Lucius, how he looks!

Enter VIRGINIUS, *attended by* NUMITORIUS *and others.*

Virginius. 'Tis ease! 'Tis ease! I am content! 'Tis peace,
'Tis anything that is most soft and quiet.
And after such a dream!—I want my daughter;
Send me my daughter!
Num. Yes, his reason's gone.
Scarce had he come in sight of his once sweet
And happy home, ere with a cry he fell
As one struck dead.—When to himself he came,
We found him as you see. How is it, brother?
Virginius. How should it be but well? Our cause is good.
Think you Rome will stand by, and see a man
Robb'd of his child? We are bad enough, but yet

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They should not so mistake us. We are slaves,
But not yet monsters.—Call my daughter to me.
What keeps her thus? I never stept within
The threshold yet, without her meeting me
With a kiss. She's very long a-coming. Call her!
Num. Icilius comes! See, my Icilius, see!

Enter ICILIUS.

Virginius. Come, come, make ready. Brother, you and he
Go on before: I'll bring her after you.
Icil. Ha!
Num. My Icilius, what a sight is there!
Virginius' reason is a wreck, so stripp'd
And broken up by wave and wind, you scarce
Would know it was the gallant bark you saw
Riding so late in safety!
Icil. [*taking* VIRGINIUS'S *hand*]. Father! Father!
That art no more a father!
Virginius. Ha! what wet
Is this upon my hand? A tear, boy! Fie,
For shame! Is that the weapon you would guard
Your bride with? First essay what steel can do!
Num. Not a tear has bless'd his eye since her death! No wonder.
The fever of his brain, that now burns out,
Has drunk the source of sorrow's torrents dry.
Icil. You would not have it otherwise? 'Twas fit
The bolt, that struck the sole remaining branch,
And blasted it, should set the trunk on fire!
Num. If we could make him weep—
Icil. I have that will make him,
If aught will do it. 'Tis her urn. 'Twas that
Which first drew tears from me. I'll fetch it. But
I cannot think you wise, to wake a man
Who's at the mercy of a tempest! Better
You suffer him to sleep it through. [ICILIUS *goes out.*
Virginius. Gather your friends together: tell them of
Dentatus' murder. Screw the chord of rage
To the topmost pitch. Mine own is not mine own!
[*Laughs.*

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That's strange enough. Why does he not dispute
My right to my own flesh, and tell my heart
Its blood is not its own? He might as well. [*Laughs.*
But I want my child.

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Justice will be defeated.
Virginius. Who says that?
He lies in the face of the gods! She is immutable,
Immaculate, and immortal! And though all
The guilty globe should blaze, she will spring up
Through the fire, and soar above the crackling pile,
With not a downy feather ruffled by
Its fierceness!
Num. He is not himself! What new
Oppression comes to tell us to our teeth,
We only mock'd ourselves to think the days
Of thraldom past?
Luc. The friends of Appius
Beset the people with solicitations.
The fickle crowd, that change with every change,
Begin to doubt and soften. Every moment
That's lost, a friend is lost. Appear among
Your friends, or lose them!
Num. Lucius, you
Remain, and watch Virginius.
[*Goes out, followed by all but* LUCIUS *and* SERVIA.
Virginius. You remember,
Don't you, nurse?
Ser. What, Virginius?
Virginius. That she nursed
The child herself. Inquire among your gossips,
Which of them saw it; and, with such of them
As can avouch the fact, without delay
Repair to the Forum. Will she come or not?
I'll call myself!—She will not dare!—O when
Did my Virginia dare—Virginia!
Is it a voice, or nothing answers me?
I hear a sound so fine—there's nothing lives
'Twixt it and silence. Such a slender one
I've heard when I have talk'd with her in fancy!

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A phantom sound! Aha! She is not here!
They told me she was here—they have deceived me;
And Appius was not made to give her up,
But keeps her, and effects his wicked purpose,
While I stand talking here, and ask you if
My daughter is my daughter! Though a legion
Sentried that brothel, which he calls his palace,
I'd tear her from him!

Luc. Hold, Virginius! Stay!
Appius is now in prison.

Virginius. With my daughter!
He has secured her there! Ha! has he so?
Gay office for a dungeon! Hold me not,
Or I will dash you down, and spoil you for
My keeper. My Virginia, struggle with him!
Appal him with thy shrieks; ne'er faint, ne'er faint!
I am coming to thee! I am coming to thee!

[VIRGINIUS *rushes out, followed by* LUCIUS, SERVIA, *and others.*

SCENE III.—*A Dungeon.*

APPIUS *discovered.*

App. From the palace to the dungeon is a road
Trod oft—not oft retrod. What hope have I
To pace it back again? I know of none.
I am as one that's dead! The dungeon, that
Encloses fallen greatness, may as well
Be call'd its tomb. I am as much the carcass
Of myself, as if the string were taken from
My neck. Their hands long for the office. Oh,
'Tis worth the half of a plebeian's life
To get his greasy fingers on the throat
Of a patrician! But I'll balk them. Come!
Appius shall have an executioner
No less illustrious than himself.

[*He is on the point of swallowing poison, when* VIBULANUS *enters.*

Who's there?

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Vibul. Your friend!
App. My Vibulanus!
Vibul. Appius, what
Was that you hid in such confusion as
I enter'd?
App. 'Tis a draught for life, which swallow'd,
She relishes so richly, that she cares not
If she ne'er drink again! Here's health to you!
Vibul. Not out of such a cup as that, my Appius.
Despair, that bids you drink it, as the cure
Of canker'd life, but lies to you, and turns
Your eyes from hope, that even now stands ready
With outstretch'd arms to rush to your embrace.
Your friends are busy for you with your foes—
Your foes become your friends. Where'er a frown
Appears against you, nothing's spared to make
The wearer doff it, and put up a smile
In its stead. Your colleague Oppius is in prison.
Your client too. Their harm's your safety: it
Distracts the appetite o' the dogs. They drop
The morsel they took up before, as soon
As a new one's thrown to them.
App. Thou givest me life
Indeed!
Vibul. That I may give thee life indeed,
I'll waste no longer time with thee; for that
Already taken to assure thee of
Thy fast-reviving fortunes, cheats them of
The aid should help to re-establish them.
Farewell, my Appius! If my absence takes
A friend from thee, it leaves one with thee—Hope!
[*Goes out.*
App. And I will clasp it to me! Never friend
Made sweeter promises. But snatch me from
Beneath the feet of the vile herd, that's now
Broke loose and roams at large, I'll show them who
They'd trample on. Hope! Hope! They say of thee,
Thou art a friend that promises, but cares not
To keep his word. This once keep thine with Appius,
And he will give thee out so true a tongue,
Thy word is bond enough!—At liberty!

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Again at liberty! O give me power
As well, for every minute of my thraldom
I'll pick a victim from the common herd
Shall groan his life in bondage. Liberty!
'Tis triumph, power, dominion, everything!
Are ye not open yet, ye servile gates?
Let fall your chains, and push your bolts aside!
It is your past and future lord commands you!
Virginius [*rushing in*]. Give me my daughter!
App. Ha!
Virginius. My child! my daughter!
My daughter! my Virginia! Give her me!
App. Thy daughter!
Virginius. Ay! Deny that she is mine,
And I will strangle thee, unless the lie
Should choke thee first.
App. Thy daughter!
Virginius. Play not with me!
Provoke me not! Equivocate, and lo!
Thou sport'st with fire. I am wild, distracted, mad!
I am all a flame—a flame! I tell thee once
For all, I want my child, and I will have her;
So give her to me.
App. Caged with a madman! Hoa!
Without there!
Virginius. Not a step thou stirr'st from hence,
Till I have found my child. Attempt that noise
Again, and I will stop the vent, that not
A squeak shall pass it. There are plugs for you
Will keep it air-tight [*showing his fingers*]. Please
you, give me back
My daughter.
App. In truth she is not here, Virginius;
Or I would give her to thee.
Virginius. Would! Ay, should!
Though would were would not. Do you say, indeed,
She is not here? You nothing know of her?
App. Nothing, Virginius! good Virginius, nothing.
Virginius. How if I thrust my hand into your breast,
And tore your heart out, and confronted it
With your tongue? I'd like it. Shall we try it? Fool!

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Are not the ruffians leagued ? The one would swear
To the tale o' the other.
App. By the gods, Virginius,
Your daughter is not in my keeping.
Virginius. Well,
Then I must seek her elsewhere. I did dream
That I had murder'd her—'Tis false ! 'twas but
A dream—She isn't here, you say—Well ! well !
Then I must go and seek her elsewhere—Yet
She's not at home—and where else should I seek her
But there or here ? Here ! here ! here ! Yes, I say,
But there or here—I tell you I must find her—
She must be here, or what do you here ? What,
But such a wonder of rich beauty could
Deck out a dungeon so as to despoil
A palace of its tenant ? Art thou not
The tyrant Appius ?—Didst thou not decree
My daughter to be Claudius' slave, who gave her
To his master ? Have you not secured her here
To compass her dishonour, ere her father
Arrives to claim her ?
App. No.
Virginius. Do you tell me so ?
Vile tyrant ! Think you, shall I not believe
My own eyes before your tongue ? Why, there she is !
There, at your back—her looks dishevell'd and
Her vestment torn ! Her cheeks all faded with
Her pouring tears, as flowers with too much rain !
Her form no longer kept and treasured up
By her maiden-pride, like a rich casket, cast
Aside, neglected and forgot, because
The richer gem was shrined in it is lost !
Villain ! is this a sight to show a father ?
And have I not a weapon to requite thee ?
[*Searches about his clothes.*
Ha ! here are ten !
App. Keep down your hands ! Help ! help !
Virginius. No other look but that ! Look on ! look
It turns my very flesh to steel—Brave girl ! [on !
Keep thine eye fix'd—let it not wink—look on !
[*They go out, struggling.*

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Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, LUCIUS, *Guard, and Soldier, bearing Virginia's urn.*

Num. Not here!

Luc. Is this the dungeon?—Appius is not here,
Nor yet Virginius. You have sure mistaken.

Guard. This is the dungeon—Here Virginius enter'd.

Num. Yet is not here!—Hush! The abode of death
Is just as silent. Gods! should the tyrant take
The father's life, in satisfaction for
The deed that robb'd him of the daughter's charms—
Hush! hark! A groan! There's something stirs!

Luc. 'Tis this way!

Num. Come on! Protect him, gods, or pardon me
If with my own hand I revenge his death.

[*They go out.*

SCENE IV.—*Another Dungeon.*

VIRGINIUS *discovered on one knee, with* APPIUS *lying dead before him. Enter* NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, LUCIUS, *Citizens, and others.*

Num. What's here? Virginius! with the tyrant prostrate and dead!

Luc. His senses are benumb'd; there is no adit to his mind, by which our words can reach it. Help to raise him: the motion may recal perception.

Num. His eye is not so deathlike fix'd: it moves a little.

Luc. Speak to him, Numitorius; he knows your voice the best.

Num. Virginius!

Luc. I think he hears you; speak again.

Num. Virginius!

Virginius. Ah!

Luc. That sigh has burst the spell which held him.

Num. Virginius! my dear brother!

Virginius. Lighter! lighter! My heart is ten times lighter! What a load it has heaved off! Where is he? I thought I had done it.

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Num. Virginius!

Virginius. Well, who are you? What do you want? I'll answer what I've done.

Num. Do you not know me, brother? Speak, Icilius, try if he knows you.

Icil. Virginius!

Num. Try again.

Icil. Virginius!

Virginius. That voice—that voice—I know that voice!
It minds me of a voice was coupled with it,
And made such music, once to hear it was
Enough to make it ever after be
Remember'd! [ICILIUS *places the urn in his hand*].
What's this?

Icil. Virginia!

[VIRGINIUS *looks alternately at* ICILIUS *and the Urn —looks at* NUMITORIUS *and* LUCIUS—*seems particularly struck by his mourning—looks at the Urn again—bursts into a passion of tears, and exclaims,* "VIRGINIA!"—*Falls on* ICILIUS's *neck. Curtain drops.*

END OF VIRGINIUS.

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EPILOGUE,

BY BARRY CORNWALL, ESQ.

Spoken by Miss Brunton.

LEAVING the common path, which many tread,
We will not wake with jokes our poet dead:
Nor shame the young creations of his pen,
By bidding all, who've perish'd, be again.
The pale Virginia, in her bloody shroud,
Lies like a shrined saint.—Oh! then, aloud
Shall we break scurril jests, and bid depart
Those thoughts of her, which fill and teach the heart?
No moral now we offer, squared in form,
But Pity, like the sun-light, bright and warm,
Comes mix'd with showers; and, fading, leaves behind
A beauty and a blossom on the mind.
We do not strain to show that "thus it grows."
And "hence we learn" what everybody knows:
But casting idle dogmas (words) aside,
We paint a villain in his purple pride;
And tearing down a power, that grew too bold,
Show—merely what was done in days of old.
Leaving this image on the soul, we go
Unto our gentler story touch'd with woe
(With woe that wantons not, nor wears away
The heart), and love too perfect for decay.
But whatsoe'er we do, we will not shame
Your better feeling, with an idle game
Of grin and mimicry (a loathsome task);
Or strip the great Muse of her mighty mask,
And hoot her from her throne of tears and sighs,
Until from folly and base jest she dies.
No; let her life be long, her reign supreme—
If but a dream, it is a glorious dream.
  Dwell then upon our tale; and bear along
With you, deep thoughts—of love—of bitter wrong—
Of freedom—of sad pity—and lust of pow'r.
The tale is fitted for an after hour.

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WILLIAM TELL:

A PLAY.

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Dedicated

TO GENERAL MINA,

IN ADMIRATION OF HIS PATRIOTISM, VALOUR, AND CONSTANCY.

Hosted by Google

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT DRURY LANE, IN 1825.)

AUSTRIANS.

Gesler	Governor of the Waldestetten	Mr. Archer.
Sarnem	his Lieutenant	Mr. Thompson.
Struth	his Seneschal	Mr. Gattie.
Rodolph	his Castellains	Mr. Comer.
Lutold		Mr. Howell.
Gerard		Mr. Fenton.
Braun	Servant to the Seneschal	Mr. Knight.
Anneli	Step-daughter to the Seneschal	Miss Povey.
Agnes	her Cousin	Mrs. Yates.

Archers, &c. &c. &c.

SWISS.

William Tell		Mr. Macready.
Albert	his Son	Miss C. Fisher.
Melchtal	Erni's Father	Mr. Young.
Erni	Patriots in league with Tell	Mr. Webster.
Furst		Mr. Armstrong.
Verner		Mr. Mercer.
Waldman	a Burgher of Altorf	Mr. Hughes.
Michael	his Son	Mr. Wallack.
Jagheli	Michael's Friend	Mr. Penley.
Pierre	Inhabitants of Altorf	Mr. Yarnold.
Theodore		Mr. O. Smith.
Savoyards		Master Edmonds.
		Mr. Fitzwilliam.
		Mr. Foster.
Emma	Tell's Wife	Mrs. Bunn.

Burghers, Mountaineers, Women, &c.

SCENE, ALTORF AND THE NEIGHBOURING MOUNTAINS.

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WILLIAM TELL.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Outside of the Castle of Altorf.—Alpine Scenery in the Background.*

Enter WALDMAN *and* MICHAEL.

Wal. Don't tell me, Michael! thou dost lead a life
As bootless as a jester's—worse than his,
For he has high retaining. Every one
Calls thee his fool—the gallant and the boy,
The gentle-born and base! Thy graceless name
Is ever tagg'd to feasts, and shows, and games,
And saucy brawls, which men as young as thou
Discourse of with grave looks. What comes of this?
Will't make thee rich? Will't give thee place in life?
Will't buy thee honour, friendship, or esteem?
Will't get thee reverence 'gainst grey hairs?

Mic. Good father!—

Wal. The current of thy life doth counter run
To that of other men's. Thy spirits, which
Were reason in thee, when thou wast a child,
As tameless still, now thou'rt become a man,
Are folly! Thriftless life, that may be call'd
More rational when in the nurse's lap
Than when in manhood's chair! Survey those towers,
And act the revel o'er of yesternight:
Think of the tyrants whom they lodge, and then
Link hands with fools and braggarts o'er their wine:
Fancy the sounds their dungeons hear, and tell

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Of such and such a jest of thine, that made
Thy wanton comrades roar.
Mic. Dear father!
Wal. Pshaw!
Thou canst not try to speak with gravity,
But one perceives thou wagg'st an idle tongue;
Thou canst not tryto look demure, but, spite
Of all thou dost, thou show'st a laugher's cheek;
Thou canst not e'en essay to walk sedate,
But in thy very gait one sees the jest,
That's ready to break out in spite of all
Thy seeming.
Mic. I'm a melancholy man,
That can't do that which with good will I would!
I pray thee, father, tell me what will change me?
Wal. Hire thyself to a sexton, and dig graves:
Never keep company but at funerals:
Beg leave to take thy bed into the church,
And sleep there: fast, until thine abstinence
Upbraid the anchorite with gluttony;
And when thou talk'st reflection, feast on naught
But water and stale bread: ne'er speak, except
At prayers and grace; and as to music, be
Content with ringing of the passing-bell
When souls do go to their account.
Mic. But if
The bells, that ring as readily for joy
As grief, should chance to ring a merry peal,
And they should drop the corse—
Wal. Then take the rope,
And hang thyself: I know no other way
To change thee.
Mic. Nay, I'll do some great feat yet.
Wal. You'll do some great feat! Take me Gesler's castle!
Mic. Humph! that would be a feat, indeed! I'll do it!
Wal. You'll do it? You'll get married, and have children,
And be a sober citizen, before
You pare your bread o' the crust. You'll do it? You'll

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Do nothing! Live until you are a hundred,
When death shall catch you, 'twill be laughing. Do it.
Look grave, talk wise, live sober, thou wilt do
A harder thing, but that thou'lt never do.

[WALDMAN *goes out.*

Mic. Hard sentence, that! Dame Nature! gentle mother,
If thou hast made me of too rich a mould
To bring the common seed of life to fruit,
Is it a fault? Kind Nature, I should lie
To say it was. Who would not have an eye
To see the sun, where others see a cloud;
A skin so temper'd as to feel the rain,
Gave other men the ague, him refresh'd;
A frame so vernal, as, in spite of snow,
To think it's genial summer all year round;
And bask himself in bleak December's scowl,
While others sit and shiver o'er a hearth?
I do not know the fool would not be such
A man! Shall I upbraid my heart because
It hath been so intent to keep me in
An ample revenue of precious mirth,
It hath forgot to hoard the duller coin
The world do trade on? No, not I, no more
Than I would empt my coffers of their gold,
Were they so furnish'd, to make room for brass,
Or disenthrone the diamond of my ring—
Supposed the gemmed toy my finger wore—
To seat a sparkless pebble in its place!
Yet here comes that, despite my wealth of mirth,
Can make a beggar of me! Father, could
You see me now, you'd find me sans a smile
In all my jester's scrip.

Enter Gesler's Archers, escorting some Swiss Peasants, prisoners; they cross the Stage, and enter the Porch of the Castle,—TELL, *at a short distance, following them.*

Tell. [*To* MICHAEL, *who is looking after them as they enter the porch.*] Do you know them?

Mic. No.

Tell. Nor I, thank Heaven! How like you that?

Mic. What?

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Telt. That.
Mic. I like it not.
Tell. It might as well be you or I.
Mic. It might.
Tell. Do you live in Altorf?
Mic. Yes.
Tell. How go they on
In Altorf?
Mic. As you see. What was a sight
A month ago, hath not the wonder now
To draw them 'cross the threshold!
Tell. Would you like—
Mic. What wouldst thou say to me?
Tell. No matter, friend.
Something so slight, that in the thinking on't
'Twas gone. The field of Grutli, Tell!—the hour's
At hand. The spirits are expecting thee
Shall bring thy country back the times again
She'd wonder this to see!
Mic. Stay, friend! a word.
If of my mind thou haply art, and think'st,
When fortune will not make us theme of mirth,
Ourselves may take the task in hand—
Tell. For what?—
Good day! [*Exit hastily.*
Mic. Acquaintance briefly broke as made!
Take Gesler's castle, did my father say?
Would I were well within the ramparts, and
At large as now? I might do such a thing.
Soft! Who comes here? Jagheli! Ha! a youth,
That's tender as a love-sick damsel's sigh.
What brings him sighing here? The Seneschal
Has a fair daughter! Friend Jagheli, mind
Thy secret. Half on't I have got already
Without thy leave; the rest thyself shalt give me.
[*Retires.*

Enter JAGHELI *and three* Savoyards, *with guitars.*

Jag. You know the air, I'm sure; 'tis very sweet:
The young musician who composed it loved;
But 'twas a bootless flame! You must have heard

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The story? It is said he taught the lady,
Who was of high degree, and made that strain
To sing to her the love he dared not speak:—
Don't you remember it? The sequel was
A mournful one! The lady liked the strain,
But did not see the tender minstrel's drift;
And still she'd have him sing it, which he did
With pining heart, o'er hopeless labour breaking!
He sung it till he died, and then, at last,
The lady found his theme; when, strange to tell!
With sweet contrition she dissolved away,
And ne'er press'd bridal bed, save the cold one
They made for her beside him. Draw thy hand
Across the strings, and wake thy saddest chord:
Perchance 'twill mind me of it. Thou hast hit it:
See if the rhymes I've strung for it agree.

[MICHAEL *listens at the back of the stage, unseen by* JAGHELI *and* SAVOYARDS.

AIR.—SAVOYARDS.

Lady, you're so heavenly fair!
Though to love is madness, still
Who beholds you can't forbear,
But adores against his will.

Reason warms the heart in vain;
Headlong passion won't obey:
Hope's deceived, and sighs again;
Love's abjured, yet holds its sway.

Mic. I pray you, have the ditty o'er again;
Of all the strains that mewing minstrels sing,
The lover's one for me. I could expire
To hear a man, with bristles on his chin,
Sing soft with upturn'd eyes and arched brows,
Which talk of trickling tears that never fall,
And through the gamut whine his tender pain;
While A and B and C such anguish speak,
As never lover felt for mistress lost.
Let's have the strain again.

Jag. To make thee mirth?
When I'm thy lackey, honest Michael, I'll

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Provide thee music. There, with thanks to boot.
[*Gives money to Savoyards, who go out.*
I am not in thy pay,
Mic. No; but I mean
To take thee into it. Wilt thou hire with me?
Nay, hang thy coyness, man! Why, thinkest thou
Thou art the only man in Altorf knows
The Seneschal has a fair daughter?
Jag. Fair
Or not, she's nought to me.
Mic. Indeed? Oh, then,
I'll tell her so!
Jag. You do not know her?
Mic. No;
For any profit it can bring to thee.
I pray thee, tell me, hath she not black teeth?
Jag. Thou know'st 'twould take the pearl to challenge them.
Mic. Her nose, I think, is somewhat set awry?
Jag. It sits like dignity on beauty's face.
Mic. Her hair is a dull black?
Jag. 'Tis shining gold!
Mic. Her figure's squat?
Jag. Betwixt the full and slim,
A mould where vie the richest charms of both!
Mic. Well, then, she hobbles in her gait?
Jag. She moves the light and flexible chamois,
If you could lend the chamois her beauty,
And add to that her modest stateliness.
Mic. You are a hopeful painter, sir! How well
You've drawn the daughter of the Seneschal!
Jag. Good Michael, thou'rt a jester; but thou'rt kind.
Thy mirth doth feast at every man's expense;
Yet with such grace of frankest confidence,
That none begrudge thee. Wilt thou be my friend?
I love the daughter of the Seneschal;
Help me to see her.
Mic. Come to church with me
Next Sunday.
Jag. I was there last Sunday, Michael—
And Sunday before last—and Sunday, too,

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Preceding that. I ne'er miss church, for there
I see the daughter of the Seneschal.
Mic. How wondrously thou'rt grown of late!
They say there is a young man in the church
That has his prayers by heart—unless indeed
He reads them in a certain angel face
On which he looks, and says them word for word,
From end to end, nor e'er is seen to turn
To other page. Can it be thou they mean?
Thou'lt have a name for most rare sanctity!
Jag. Good Michael, canst thou help me?
Mic. If I knew
The lady.
Jag. What! dost thou not know her, then?
With what impediments is love environ'd!
Mic. Why, that's love's gain; it would not else be
Love's the impediments that lovers meet; [love.
Or wherefore sing it, as your poets do,
A thing that lives in plots and stratagems?
They know not love who need but woo to wed,
But they who fain would wed, but dare not woo;
That's to be sound in love—to feel it from
The heart's deep centre to the fingers' ends.
As sweetest fruit is that which is forbid,
So fairest maid is she that is withheld.
When I do fall in love, I'll pick a maid
Whose sire has vow'd her to a nunnery;
And she shall have, moreover, for her warders,
Two maiden aunts, past wooing; and to these
I'll add an abigail, has bridesmaid stood
To twenty younger cousins, yet has ne'er
Been ask'd herself; and under her I'll set
A male retainer of the family
For twenty years or more—as surly as
A mastiff on the chain; and, that my fair
May lack no sweet provocative of love,
Her tempting lattice shall be grated, and
Her bower shall be surrounded with a wall
Full ten feet high, on which an iron row
Of forked shrubs shall stand and beckon me:
And then I'll be a lover!

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Jag. Show me how
Thou'dst win thy love by winning mine for me.
Mic. Hush! here's the servant of the Seneschal;
A dog he sends on errands, without brains
To take them half a yard! What! wouldst attempt
To win the daughter of the Seneschal?
Wouldst enter Gesler's castle?
Jag. Yes!
Mic. The man—
The very man for me!—Aside, and mark! [*They retire.*

Enter BRAUN, *from Porch.*

Bra. Three yards of buckram—right! Thread thereunto—
But how much thread? a hank?—a hank's too much
To sew three yards of buckram! It must be
A skein. A skein it is! right there. What next?
Twelve buckles with the straps—that is, twelve straps,
Oh, very right! In the fourth place, a score
Of needles—twenty needles to the score.
I'm right again, by that! And lastly—what
Comes lastly? Something is behind, I know,
For I bethought me of my fingers, to

Enter Seneschal.

Remember, there were five things I should get;
And what's the fifth? Or have I counted wrong?
There's buckram, one—thread, two—a skein of thread,
Twelve buckles, and the straps—the straps and they
Do go together—three: the fourth thing is
A score of needles. There's my little finger
Remaining yet. I'd give my hand to know
For what that finger stands.
Sen. What stands it for?
Bra. Dear master!
Sen. Dolt!
Bra. Kind master!
Sen. Jackanapes!
What stands it for?
Bra. I'll tell, and give me time.
Sen. What time? a day? a week? a month? a year?
Or till my daughter's dead?

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Bra. I was to fetch
A leech unto your daughter.
Sen. Wast thou so?
Wilt thou forget again? [*Shaking his cane at him.*
Bra. No, sir!
Sen. Thou wilt!
Or that, or something else.
Bra. Indeed, sir, no!
Sen. Then say thy errand o'er again! Say't out!
See thou art right in every tittle on't,
Or look to't. Now!
Bra. Three yards of buckram—
Sen. No!
Begin with the leech.
Bra. I set the leech against
My little finger, sir.
Sen. Begin with him.
Bra. My little finger, sir, stood for the leech.
Sen. I say, begin with the leech!
Bra. I will! I will!
Well, then, the leech. I go to bring him to
My lady, your daugher, for she's sick.
Sen. Go on.
Mic. [*Aside to* JAGHELI.] Jagheli, thou must play the leech! Away! [JAGHELI *goes out.*
Sen. Go on.
Bra. Three yards of buckram, I'm to fetch—
Twelve buckles and the straps; and to conclude,
A score of needles.
Sen. [*striking him*]. Rascal, where's the thread
To sew the buckram? Bring'st thou needles, fool!
And not the thread? Eh, starling? Eh? Wilt sew
The buckram without thread?
Mic. [*Coming forward, and striking him.*] Eh? ras-
Heard ever mortal man the like of this? [cal! Eh?
Eh, platter! tankard! nightcap! good for naught
Except to eat, and drink, and sleep! Forget
Thy errand! Serve thy worthy master thus!
Thy patient master! thy kind master!—Get
Three meals a-day, thy lodging, clothing, hire,
And civil words to boot, and yet not be

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Trustworthy to the fetching of a skein
Of thread! Eh! Stomach! Master Seneschal,
I'll run your errand straight. A leech, three yards
Of buckram, thread a skein, a gross of needles—
Bring needles without thread! Eh? gullet!—and
A dozen buckles with the straps.
Sen. Good lad!
What art thou, prithee?
Mic. Sir, a sober youth,
Son to a worthy burgher of the town;
Was brought up in a monastery, has
Read Greek and Latin, knows to cast accounts,
And writes a hand as good as any clerk's
In Altorf, sir, with sundry other gifts,
As people say, but which 'twere not discreet
In me to speak of.
Sen. Why, a modest lad.
Dost want a service?
Mic. Not as varlets want
A service, sir, who let their duty out
For coin: I have enough; but I would serve
For love at any time, especially
The Seneschal of Altorf. Shall I run
Your errand?
Sen. Why, a model of a youth!
Thou shalt. Give him the money, sir.
Bra. The money!
Mic. Ay, Sit-over-meals! can I provide the things
Without the money?
Sen. Rascal, where's the money?
Bra. I put it in this pocket, sir, I'm sure
I put it in this pocket! [*Feeling for it.*
Sen. Empty it, sir.
Mic. [*searching the pocket*]. What's this?
A crust of cheese! O ne'er-content!
Sen. Well! where is it?
Bra. Or could it be in this?
Sen. Out with't.
Mic. [*searching the other pocket*]. What's here? a head of garlic, and
A capon's leg! O epicure!

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Sen. The money!
Bra. Yes, sir.
Sen. Thy vest, try that! The money, sirrah!
Bra. Good sir, this instant!
Sen. Instant, dog! Wilt swear
Thou'lt find it in an hour?
Mic. Or in a day.
Eh? lack-grace! knave! incorrigible knave,
To chafe so sweet a tempered gentleman.
What's that thou keep'st the last three fingers of
Thy careful hand upon?
Bra. The money! there's
The money.
[*Opens his hand slowly, and shows the money.*
Sen. Give it him!
Mic. A patch, a rag,
A tatter of a serving man! to carry
His master's money in his greasy hand,
Or think of thrusting it into his poke,
Receptacle of musty eatables—
Cheese, garlic, scraps of meat, to wit; instead
Of lodging't in a safe and comely purse.
I'll run your errand, sir. Three yards of buckram,
A skein of thread, a score of needles, and
Twelve buckles with straps; not to forget
To bring a leech to see your daughter, sir.
A turnspit cur—I'll run your errand, sir!
[*They go out severally.*

SCENE II.—*The Field of Grutli.—A Lake and Mountains.*

Enter TELL, *with a long bow.*

Tell. Ye crags and peaks, I'm with you once again!
I hold to you the hands you first beheld,
To show they still are free. Methinks I hear
A spirit in your echoes answer me,
And bid your tenant welcome to his home
Again! O sacred forms, how proud you look!

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How high you lift your heads into the sky!
How huge you are! how mighty, and how free!
How do you look, for all your bared brows,
More gorgeously majestical than kings
Whose loaded coronets exhaust the mine!
Ye are the things that tower, that shine—whose smile
Makes glad—whose frown is terrible—whose forms,
Robed or unrobed, do all the impress wear
Of awe divine—whose subject never kneels
In mockery, because it is your boast
To keep him free! Ye guards of liberty,
I'm with you once again!—I call to you
With all my voice! I hold my hands to you
To show they still are free! I rush to you
As though I could embrace you!

Erni [*without*]. William! William!

Tell [*looks out*]. Here, Erni, here!

Enter ERNI.

Erni. Thou'rt sure to keep the time,
That comest before the hour.

Tell. The hour, my friend,
Will soon be here. O, when will liberty
Be here? My Erni, that's my thought, which still
I find beside. Scaling yonder peak,
I saw an eagle wheeling near its brow:
O'er the abyss his broad expanded wings
Lay calm and motionless upon the air,
As if he floated there without their aid,
By the sole act of his unlorded will,
That buoy'd him proudly up. Instinctively
I bent my bow; yet kept he rounding still
His airy circle, as in the delight
Of measuring the ample range beneath,
And round about, absorb'd, he heeded not
The death that threaten'd him.—I could not shoot!—
'Twas liberty. I turn'd my bow aside,
And let him soar away.

Verner [*without*]. Tell!—Tell!

Enter VERNER.

Tell. Here, Verner!

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Furst. [*without.*] Tell!

Enter FURST.

Tell. Here, friends!—Well met!—Do we go on?
Ver. We do.
Tell. Then you can reckon on the friends you named?
Ver. On every man of them.
Furst. And I on mine.
Erni. Not one I sounded, but doth rate his blood
As water in the cause! Then fix the day
Before we part.
Ver. No, Erni: rather wait
For some new outrage to amaze and rouse
The common mind, which does not brood so much
On wrongs gone by, as it doth quiver with
The sense of present ones.
Tell. [*To Verner*]. I wish with Erni,
But I think with thee. Yet when I ask myself
On whom the wrong shall light for which we wait—
Whose vineyard they'll uproot—whose flocks they'll ravage—
Whose threshold they'll profane—whose hearth pollute—
Whose roof they'll fire?—When this I ask myself,
And think upon the blood of pious sons,
The tears of venerable fathers, and
The shrieks of mothers, fluttering round their spoil'd
And nestless young—I almost take the part
Of generous indignation, that doth blush
At such expense to wait on sober prudence
Furst. Yet it is best.
Tell. On that we're all agreed!
Who fears the issue when the day shall come?
Ver. Not I!
Furst. Nor I!
Erni. Nor I!
Tell. I'm not the man
To mar this harmony—Nor I, no more
Than any of you! You commit to me
The warning of the rest. Remember, then,
My dagger sent to any one of you—

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As time may press—is word enough. The others
I'll see myself. Our course is clear.—Dear Erni,
Remember me to Melctal. Furst, provide
What store you can of arms. Do you the same.
[*To* ERNI *and* VERNER.
The next aggression of the tyrant is
The downfal of his power?—Remember me
To Melctal, Erni:—to my father. Tell him
He has a son was never born to him!
Farewell!—When next we meet upon this theme,
All Switzerland shall witness what we do!
[*They go out severally.*

SCENE III.—*A Chamber in the inside of the Castle, with an open window.*

Enter ANNELI *and* AGNES.

Ann. Art sure thou heard'st him?
Agn. Do I hear you, coz?
As sure did I hear him, and see him, too,
From yonder casement.
Ann. Sweet! look out again:
Perhaps he'll still be there.
Agn. I wonder, cousin,
You'd send another's eyes to look for that
You'd give your own to see! You silly thing!
Look out yourself. [*They go to the window.*
Ann. Ah, sweet! look out for me,
For should he not be there, 'twill pain me less
To miss him by your eyes than by my own.
In sooth, you've set my heart a beating so,
I know not, coz, if I have ears or eyes
To see or hear him!
Agn. Well, lend me your hand,
To help me up. [ANNELI *assists* AGNES *to climb up to the casement.*] Dear love, you tremble so
You'll pull me down! Oh, silly silly thing,
To be so scared at what you so desire!
Ann. Fear, coz, you know, is offspring to desire.

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Agn. A gentle mother to a froward child!
Love finds out wonders, coz; but find not I
The thing I look for. No; he is not there.
Ann. Nay, look again.
Agn. I cannot make him there
By looking, coz—could you?
Ann. I would I could!
I'd look my eyes blind till he came.
Agn. Indeed!
And see him then?
Ann. And see him then! the thought
That I might see him then would bring me back
My sight.
Agn. It would! oh, wonder-working love!
I would not have you risk your sight, dear coz;
But I would have you try another thing,
You'd run no risk to lose, unless they wrong
Our sex, who say its voice is lasting as
'Tis sweet. Sing, coz: he'll hear and come. Come, sing.
Ann. Sing, cousin!
Agn. Ay.
Ann. Am I not sick?—confined
To my own chamber—sick, coz—doubly sick—
For fear of one I would not wed; for love
Of one I would? Have they not sent just now
To bring the leech to see me? And you'd have
Me sing! Oh, thoughtless coz!
Agn. For too much thought
Never at rest to do my cousin good.
Did I not bid thee hate the Castellain,
When thou didst say thou couldst not love him, coz?
Did I not bid thee love the burgher's son,
When thou didst say thou never couldst hate him?
And when thy father swore he'd have thee wed,
And thou didst say thou'dst sooner die than wed,
Did I not bid thee, coz, fall sick at once,
And die? And now, when to the casement comes
The man thou'dst wish the casement, door, and all,
Were open to, would I not have thee sing,
To let him know there's neither bolt nor bar?
He'd wish to draw in love and honesty,

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You'd wish him not? But, cousin, as you say
You're sick, and as for your sweet health 'tis good
That others think so, I'll try and e'en
Sing for you, coz.

AIR.—AGNES.

O well you ride, Sir Knight, O well
Your courser you bestride;
But you'd ride better could you tell
Who sees you as you ride—
Not your lady, Sir Knight—not your lady, Sir Knight,
But her father, who wishes you far out of sight.

O well you sing, Sir Knight, O well
Your ditty you rehearse;
But you'd sing better could you tell
Who lists your tender verse.—
Not your lady, Sir Knight—not your lady, Sir Knight,
But your rival, who's fretting and fuming for spite.

O well you climb, Sir Knight, O well
You climb to your lady's bower;
But you'd climb better could you tell
Who sees you scale the tower.
'Tis your lady, Sir Knight—'tis your lady, Sir Knight,
Who wishes the tower was not half the height.

O fast you fly, Sir Knight, O fast
You urge your laden steed;
But you'd ride slower, if you guess'd
How little is the need.
They have turn'd to the left—you've taken the right,
And you should be wedding, not riding, Sir Knight.

Enter the SENESCHAL.

Sen. How now! What's this? Ha! singing at the casement?

Agn. To please my cousin, sir.

Sen. How? Anneli!

Agn. I woo'd her from her chamber: change, they say,
Is physic to the sick, when medicine
More costly's virtueless!

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Sen. And who made thee
A doctor?
Agn. Nature.
Sen. Nature? Yes, I doubt not
'Twas nature taught thee change was good; it is
Thy sex's universal remedy—
Physic they swallow without making faces,
Anneli!
Ann. Sir?
Sen. Art better, girl?
Ann. No, sir.
Sen. Better or worse I'll have thee soon. The leech
Will straight be here—he should be coming now.
Thy chamber!
Ann. [*To Agnes.*] Should he find I am not ill!
Agn. He'll find he's not a ducat richer by it,
So never fear:—he'll find thee very ill.
If thou art not well until he makes thee so,
Thou shalt be sick, coz, to thy heart's content!
[ANNELI *goes out.*
Sen. Agnes.
Agn. Yes, sir.
Sen. What says thy cousin?
Agn. Nought.
Sen. What didst thou say to her?
Agn. I told her, sir,
To keep her heart up, and not fear the leech.
Sen. Not fear the leech!
Agn. E'er since you spoke of him,
She has done nothing, sir, but talk of lancets,
Caustics, and blisters; powders, nauseous draughts,
With fifty other shocking things, that much
I fear me, sir, she will feign well to cheat
The leech.
Sen. Ha! think'st thou so?
Agn. I'm sure on't.
She has been practising e'er since you named him.
Sen. I thought she look'd much better!
Agn. Better, sir!
She's worse, much worse! The mischief's inward, sir.

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In short, she's going—going, sir: and yet
She'd sooner die than undergo the leech.
Sen. Ne'er fear, ne'er fear: she shall not cheat him so.
I'll not believe him, though he says she's well.
I'll make him think her ill. No drug he has
But shall be fully tried on her; his pills,
Emplastrums, ointments, julaps, cataplasms,
Shall take their turn with her; and if these fail
We'll bring his knives and lancets to her; nor,
When all is done, shall he give o'er, until
She's well again, and weds the Castellain

Enter BRAUN.

Braun. The leech is here, sir.

Enter MICHAEL, *with* JAGHELI, *disguised as a Leech.*

Mic. Sir, I've brought the gentleman,
And all the articles you bade me get.
Sen. Good lad, and active!
Welcome, sir! Methinks
He's very young! Art sure he is a leech?
Mic. A leech, sir! Ay, and such a one—there's not
His fellow to be found in Altorf, sir.
Remember, sir, it is the use of time,
Not time itself, that's written in our looks.
Forty is younger far than twenty, sir,
When that sees husbanding, but this does not.
But never take my word for't; only try
His lancet—do, sir—'tis miraculous
How skilfully he can phlebotomize.
No scratch, sir, prick of a pin, or flea-bite, sir,
But real blade-work. Let him bleed you, sir.
Sen. No, no; on second looks, methinks he's not
So young.
Mic. Past forty, sir.
Sen. Past forty! Come,
Take ten from that.
Mic. Ten, sir! I pray you, lady,
Provide a ribbon for the Seneschal,
And something soft to make a compress of.
[AGNES *goes out.*
Ten do you say, sir? Ten? Ten years ago

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He bled and blister'd me—I'll show you, sir,
The mark of his lancet.
Sen. Nay, good youth, don't strip
Thy sleeve.
Mic. Strip yours, then, sir, and let him try
His skill upon you. Fetch a basin, rascal!
[BRAUN *goes out.*
'Twill do you good, sir: for a healthy man,
You're over-full of blood. To lose a little
Will benefit you much. Your cheek's a tint
Too florid, sir. There's indigestion in't,
Which breeds vertigo; for preventing which
[*Getting a chair.*
There's nothing like the breathing of a vein.

Re-enter AGNES, *with a ribbon, &c.;* BRAUN, *with a basin.*

Mic. Sit down, sir.
Sen. Nay, good lad!— [*Sits.*
Mic. Good master leech,
Your case of instruments, wherein you store
Your lancets, scalpels, and your scarifiers—
The Seneschal wants bleeding.
Sen. No, no, no! [*Rises up and runs.*
I am content—he is a man of skill.
Mic. Just let him take a single ounce of blood,
To see how he can use a lancet, sir.
Sen. I tell thee, no!—I'm sure he is a leech.—
Mic. But half an ounce.
Sen. Good youth, I would not wrong
The worthy man, by asking him to take
A single drop. I'm sure he is a leech!
One needs but look at him to know that he
Can bleed; and for his years, to see him close,
He's far from young; past forty, at least.
Good sir, put up your case of instruments,
And come along with me to see my daughter.
And, Agnes, give this youth a cup of wine,
With what you have that's best to relish it.
A most sagacious leech, I'm sure—a leech
Than whom none ever better look'd his calling.
END OF ACT I. [*They go out.*

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ACT II.

SCENE I.—TELL'S *Cottage on the right of a Mountain —a distant view of a Lake, backed by Mountains of stupendous height, their tops covered with snow, and lighted at the very points by the rising Sun, the rest of the distance being yet in shade—on one side a Vineyard.*

Enter EMMA, *from the Cottage.*

Emma. O, the fresh morning! Heaven's kind messenger,
That never empty handed comes to those
Who know to use its gifts.—Praise be to him
Who loads it still, and bids it constant run
The errand of his bounty!—Praise be to him!
We need his care that on the mountain's cliff
Lodge by the storm, and cannot lift our eyes,
But piles on piles of everlasting snows,
O'erhanging us, remind us of his mercy.

ALBERT *appears on an eminence.*

Alb. My mother!
Emma. Albert!
Alb. [*Descending.*] Bless thee!
Emma. Bless thee, Albert!
How early were you up?
Alb. Before the sun.
Emma. Ay, strive with him. He never lies a-bed
When it is time to rise. He ever is
The constant'st workman, that goes through his task,
And shows us how to work by setting to't
With smiling face; for labour's light as ease
That cheerfulness doth take in hand. Be like
The sun.
Alb. What you would have me like, I'll be like,
As far as will, to labour join'd, can make me.
Emma. Well said, my boy! Knelt you, when you got up
To-day?

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Alb. I did; and do so every day.
Emma. I know you do! And think you, when you kneel,
To whom you kneel?
Alb. To HIM who made me, mother.
Emma. And in whose name?
Alb. The name of him, who died
For me and all men, that all men and I
Should live.
Emma. That's right! Remember that, my son:
Forget all things but that—remember that!
'Tis more than friends or fortune; clothing, food;
All things of earth; yea, life itself.—It is
To live when these are gone, where they are nought
With God!—My son, remember that!
Alb. I will!
Emma. You have been early up, when I, that play'd
The sluggard in comparison, am up
Full early; for the highest peaks alone,
As yet, behold the sun. Now tell me what
You ought to think on, when you see the sun
So shining on the peak?
Alb. That as the peak
Feels not the pleasant sun, or feels it least!
So they, who highest stand in fortune's smile,
Are gladden'd by it least, or not at all!
Emma. And what's the profit you should turn this to?
Alb. Rather to place my good in what I have,
Than think it worthless, wishing to have more:
For more is not more happiness, so oft
As less.
Emma. I'm glad you husband what you're taught.
That is the lesson of content, my son;
He who finds which, has all—who misses, nothing.
Alb. Content is a good thing.
Emma. A thing, the good
Alone can profit by.
Alb. My father's good.
Emma. What say'st thou, boy?
Alb. I say my father's good.

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Emma. Yes; he is good! what then?
Alb. I do not think
He is content—I'm sure he's not content;
Nor would I be content, were I a man,
And Gesler seated on the rock of Altorf!
A man may lack content, and yet be good.
Emma. I did not say all good men found content.—
I would be busy; leave me.
Alb. You're not angry?
Emma. No, no, my boy.
Alb. You'll kiss me?
Emma. Will I not!
The time will come you will not ask your mother
To kiss you!
Alb. Never!
Emma. Not when you're a man?
Alb. I'll never be a man to see that time:
I'd rather die, now when I am a child,
Than live to be a man, and not love you!
Emma. Live—live to be a man, and love your mother!
[*They embrace*—ALBERT *runs off into the cottage.*
Why should my heart sink? 'tis for this we rear them!
Cherish their tiny limbs; pine if a thorn
But mar their tender skin; gather them to us
Closer than miser hugs his bag of gold;
Bear more for them than slave, who makes his flesh
A casket for the rich purloined gem—
To send them forth into a wintry world,
To brave its flaws and tempests!—They must go;
Far better, then, they go with hearty will!
Be that my consolation.—Nestling as
He is, he is the making of a bird
Will own no cowering wing. 'Twas fine—'twas fine
To see my eaglet on the verge o' the nest,
Ruffling himself at sight of the big gulf
He feels anon he'll have the wing to soar.

Re-enter ALBERT *from the Cottage, with a bow and arrows, and a rude target, which he sets up during the first lines, laying his bow and quiver on the ground.*

What have you there?

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Alb. My bow and arrows, mother.

Emma. When will you use them like your father, boy?

Alb. Some time, I hope.

Emma. You brag! There's not an archer
In all Helvetia can compare with him.

Alb. But I'm his son; and when I am a man,
I may be like him. Mother, do I brag
To think I some time may be like my father?
If so, then is it he that teaches me;
For ever as I wonder at his skill,
He calls me boy, and says I must do more
Ere I become a man!

Emma. May you be such
A man as he—if Heaven wills, better—I'll
Not quarrel with its work; yet 'twill content me
If you are only such a man!

Alb. I'll show you
How I can shoot. [*Shoots.*] Look, mother! there's within
An inch!

Emma. O fy! it wants a hand.
[*Going into the cottage.*

Alb. A hand's
An inch for me. I'll hit it yet. Now for it!
[*Shoots again.*

While ALBERT *continues to shoot, the light gradually approaches the base of the mountains in the distance, and spreads itself over the lake and valley.*

Enter TELL, *watching* ALBERT *some time in silence.*

Tell. That's scarce a miss that comes so near the mark!
Well aim'd, young archer! With what ease he bends
The bow! To see those sinews, who'd believe
Such strength did lodge in them? Well aim'd again!
There plays the skill will thin the chamois' herd,
And bring the lammer-geyer from the cloud
To earth. Perhaps do greater feats—perhaps
Make man its quarry, when he dares to tread
Upon his fellow man. That little arm,

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His mother's palm can span, may help, anon,
To pull a sinewy tyrant from his seat,
And from their chains a prostrate people lift
To liberty. I'd be content to die,
Living to see that day!—What, Albert!
Alb. Ah!
My father. [*Running to* TELL, *who embraces him.*
Emma. [*Running from the cottage.*] William!—
Welcome, welcome, William!
I did not look for you till noon, and thought
How long 'twould be ere noon would come! You're come—
How soon 'twill now be here and gone! O William!
When you are absent from me, I count time
By minutes; which, when you are here, flies by
In hours, that are not noted till they're out!
Now this is happiness! Joy's doubly joy
That comes before the time—it is a debt
Paid ere 'tis due, which fills the owner's heart
With gratitude, and yet 'tis but his own!
And are you well? and has the chase proved good?
How has it fared with you? Come in; I'm sure
You want refreshment.
Tell. No; I did partake
A herdsman's meal, upon whose lonely chalet
I chanced to light. I've had bad sport; my track
Lay with the wind, which to the start'lish game
Betray'd me still. One only prize; and that
I gave mine humble host. You raise the bow
Too fast. [*To* ALBERT, *who has returned to his practice.*]
Bring't slowly to the eye— [ALBERT *shoots.*
You've miss'd.
How often have you hit the mark to-day?
Alb. Not once yet.
Tell. You're not steady. I perceived
You waver'd now. Stand firm!—let every limb
Be braced as marble, and as motionless.
Stand like the sculptor's statue on the gate
Of Altorf, that looks life, yet neither breathes
Nor stirs. [ALBERT *shoots.*] That's better.
Emma. William! William!—O!

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To be the parents of a boy like that !—
Why speak you not—and wherefore do you sigh ?
What's in your heart to keep the transport out
That fills up mine, when looking on our child
Till it o'erflows mine eye ? [ALBERT *shoots.*
Tell. You've miss'd again !
Dost see the mark ? Rivet your eye to it !
There let it stick, fast as the arrow would,
Could you but send it there ?
Emma. Why, William, don't
You answer me ? [ALBERT *shoots.*
Tell. Again ! How would you fare,
Suppose a wolf should cross your path, and you
Alone, with but your bow, and only time
To fix a single arrow ? 'Twould not do
To miss the wolf ! You said, the other day,
Were you a man, you'd not let Gesler live—
'Twas easy to say that. Suppose you, now,
Your life or his depended on that shot !—
Take care ! That's Gesler !—Now for liberty !
Right to the tyrant's heart ! [ALBERT *shoots.*] Well done, my boy !
Come here !—Now, Emma, I will answer you :
Do I not love you ? Do I not love our child ?
Is not that cottage dear to me, where I
Was born ? How many acres would I give
That little vineyard for, which I have watch'd
And tended since I was a child ? Those crags
And peaks—what spired city would I take
To live in in exchange for them ?—Yet what
Are these to me ? What is this boy to me ?
What art thou, Emma, to me—when a breath
Of Gesler's can take all ?
Emma. O, William, think
How little is that all to him—too little
For Gesler, sure, to take. Bethink thee, William,
We have no treasure.
Tell. Have we not ? Have we
No treasure ? How ! No treasure ? What !
Have we not liberty ?—that precious ore,
That pearl, that gem, the tyrant covets most,

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Yet can't enjoy himself—for which he drains
His coffers of their coin—his land of blood;
Goes without sleep—pines himself sallow—pale—
Yea, makes a pawn of his own soul—lacks ease—
Frets till the bile gnaws appetite away—
Forgets both heaven and hell, only to strip
The wearer of it! Emma, we have that,
And that's enough for Gesler!

Emma. Then, indeed,
My William we have much to fear!

Tell. We have;
And best it is we know how much. Then, Emma,
Make up thy mind, wife; make it up: remember
What wives and mothers on these very hills
Once breathed the air you breathe: Helvetia
Hath chronicles, the masters of the world,
As they were call'd—the Romans—kept for her:
And in those chronicles 'tis writ—and praise
Set down by foes must needs, at least, be true—
'Tis writ, I say, that when the Rhetians—
They were the early tenants of those hills—
Withstood the lust of Roman tyranny,
With Claudius Drusus, and a certain Nero,
Sons-in-law of Octavius Cæsar, at
Its head—the Rhetian women, when the men,
O'ermatch'd by numbers, did at last give way,
Seeing that liberty was gone, threw life
And nature, too, as worthless, after it;
Rush'd through the gaping ranks of them that fled,
And on the dripping weapons of the red
Victorious van impaled themselves and children?

Emma. O, William!

Tell. Emma, let the boy alone;
Don't clasp him so—'twill soften him! Go, sir,
See if the valley sends us visitors
To-day; some friend, perchance, may need thy guidance.
Away! [ALBERT *goes out.*] He's better from thee,
Emma; the time
Is come, a mother on her breast should fold
Her arms, as they had done with such endearments,
And bid her children go from her to hunt

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For danger, which will presently hunt them—
The less to heed it.

Emma. William, you are right;
The task you set me I will try to do:
I would not live myself to be a slave—
I would not live to be the dam of one!
No! woman as I am, I would not, William!
Then choose my course for me; whate'er it is,
I will say, ay, and do it, too; suppose
To dress my little stripling for the war,
And take him by the hand, to lead him to't!
Yes, I would do it at thy bidding, William,
Without a tear: I say that I would do it—
But, now I only talk of doing it,
I can't help shedding one! [*Weeps.*

Tell. Did I not choose thee
From out the fairest of the maids of Uri,
Less that in beauty thou didst them surpass,
Than that thy soul that beauty overmatch'd?
Why rises on thy matron cheek that blush,
Mantling it fresh as in thy virgin morn,
But that I did so? Do I wonder, then,
To find thee equal to the task of virtue,
Although a hard one? No, I wonder not!
Why should I, Emma, make thy heart acquainted
With ills I could shut out from it—rude guests
For such a home! Here, only, we have had
Two hearts; in all things else—in love, in faith,
In hope, in joy, that never had but one!
But henceforth we must have but one here, also.

Emma. O, William, you have wrong'd me—kindly
wrong'd me.
When ever yet was happiness the test
Of love in man or woman? Who'd not hold
To that which must advantage him? Who'd not
Keep promise to a feast, or mind his pledge
To share a rich man's purse? There's not a churl,
However base, but might be thus approved
Of most unswerving constancy. But that
Which loosens churls, ties friends! or changes them,
Only to stick the faster. William! William!

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That man knew never yet the love of woman,
Who never had an ill to share with her!
Tell. Not even to know that would I in so
Ungentle partnership engage thee, Emma,
So will could help it, but necessity,
The master yet of will, how strong soe'er,
Commands me prove thee. When I wedded thee,
The land was free! O! with what pride I used
To walk these hills, and look up to my God,
And bless him that it was so. It was free—
From end to end, from cliff to lake 'twas free!—
Free as our torrents are that leap our rocks,
And plough our valleys, without asking leave;
Or as our peaks that wear their caps of snow,
In very presence of the regal sun!
How happy was I in it then! I loved
Its very storms! Yes, Emma, I have sat
In my boat at night, when, midway o'er the lake,
The stars went out, and down the mountain gorge
The wind came roaring—I have sat and eyed
The thunder breaking from his cloud, and smiled
To see him shake his lightnings o'er my head,
And think I had no master save his own!
You know the jutting cliff round which a track
Up hither winds, whose base is but the brow
To such another one, with scanty room
For two a-breast to pass? O'ertaken there
By the mountain blast, I've laid me flat along,
And while gust follow'd gust more furiously,
As if to sweep me o'er the horrid brink,
And I have thought of other lands, whose storms
Are summer flaws to those of mine, and just
Have wish'd me there—the thought that mine was free
Has check'd that wish, and I have raised my head,
And cried in thraldom to that furious wind,
Blow on! This is the land of liberty!
Emma. I almost see thee on that fearful pass,
And yet, so seeing thee, I have a feeling
Forbids me wonder that thou didst so.
Tell. 'Tis

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A feeling must not breathe where Gesler breathes,
But may within these arms. List, Emma, list;
A league is made to pull the tyrant down
E'en from his seat upon the rock of Altorf.
Four hearts have staked their blood upon the cast,
And mine is one of them.
Emma. I did not start;—
Tell me more, William!
Tell. I will tell thee all.—
Alb. [*Without.*] O, father!
Old Melctal. [*Without.*] Tell!—Tell!—William!
Emma. Don't you know
That voice!

Enter OLD MELCTAL, *blind, led by* ALBERT.

Old M. Where art thou, William?
Tell. Who is't?
Emma. Do you not know him?
Tell. No!—It cannot be
The voice of Melctal!
Alb. Father, it is Melctal!
Emma. What ails you, Tell?
Alb. O, father, speak to him.
Emma. What passion shakes you thus?
Tell. His eyes—where are they?
Melctal has eyes.
Old M. Tell! Tell!
Tell. 'Tis Melctal's voice.
Where are his eyes? Have they put out his eyes?
Has Gesler turn'd the little evening of
The old man's life to night, before its time?
To such black night as sees not with the day
All round it! Father, speak; pronounce the name
Of Gesler!
Old M. Gesler.
Tell. Gesler has torn out
The old man's eyes! Support thy mother! Erni?
Where's Erni? Where's thy son? Is he alive?
And are his father's eyes torn out?
Old M. He lives, my William,
But knows it not.

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Tell. When he shall know it! Heavens,
When he shall know it!—I am not thy son,
Yet—
Emma. [*Alarmed at his increasing vehemence.*]
William!—William!
Alb. Father!
Tell. Could I find
Something to tear—to rend, were worth it!—something
Most ravenous and bloody!—something like
Gesler!—a wolf;—no, no! a wolf's a lamb
To Gesler! It is a natural hunger makes
The wolf a savage; and, savage as he is,
Yet with his kind he gently doth consort.
'Tis but his lawful prey he tears; and that
He finishes—not mangles, and then leaves
To live!—They slander him who call him cruel:
He hath no joy in cruelty, but as
It ministers to his most needful want:
He does not know that he is cruel—no—
Not when he rends an infant. I would let
The wolf go free for Gesler!—Water! Water!
My tongue cleaves to my roof!
Old M. What ails thee, William?
I pray thee, William, let me hear thy voice!
That's not thy voice!
Tell. I cannot speak to thee!
Emma. [*Returning with a vessel of water.*] Here,
William!
Tell. Emma!
Emma. Drink!
Tell. I cannot drink!
Emma. Your eyes are fix'd.
Tell. Melctal!—he has no eyes! [*Bursts into tears.*
The poor old man! [*Falls on* MELCTAL'S *neck.*
Old M. I feel thee, Tell! I care not
That I have lost my eyes! I feel thy tears—
They're more to me than eyes! When I had eyes,
I never knew thee, William, as I know
Thee now without. I do not want my eyes!
Tell. How came it, father? briefly, father! quick
And briefly! Action! action! I'm in such glee

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For work—so eager to be doing—have
Such stomach for a task, I've scarcely patience
To wait to know what 'tis—Here, here; sit down.
Now, father!

[OLD MELCTAL *sits down.*—TELL *kneels.*

Old M. Yesterday, when I and Erni
Went to the field, to bring our harvest home,
Two soldiers of the tyrant's came upon us,
And without cause alleged, or interchange
Of word, proceeded to unyoke the oxen.

Tell. Go on.

Old M. As one stunn'd by a thunder-clap
Stands sudden still, nor for a while bethinks him
Of taking shelter from the storm, so we,
Confounded by an act so bold, a while
Look'd on in helpless silence; till at length
Erni, as sudden as the hurricane,
That lays the oak uprooted, ere you see
Its branches quiver, bounding on the spoilers,
Wrench'd from their grasp the yoke, and would have smote
Them dead, had they not ta'en to instant flight.

Tell. Did he pursue them?

Old M. No; I threw myself
Between.

Tell. Why didst thou save them?

Old M. 'Twas my son
I saved! I clasp'd his knees—I calm'd his rage,
I forced him from me to the caverns of
Mount Faigel, William, till the tyrant's wrath
Should cool, or be diverted. 'Twas my son
I saved: for, scarcely was he out of sight,
And I within my cottage, when the cries
Of Gesler's bands beset it, calling for
The blood of Erni! William, he was safe,—
Clear of their fangs! My son was safe! O, think—
Think, William, what I felt to see his lair—
His very lair beset, and know my boy,—
My lion boy, was safe! Enough; they seized me,
And dragg'd me before Gesler.

Tell. Say no more!

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His life cost you your eyes. 'Tis worth a pair
Of eyes, but not your eyes, old man. No, no;
He would have given it ten times over for
But one of them. But one? But for a hair
O' the lash! My bow and quiver! He was by?
Old M. Was by.
Tell. More arrows for my quiver.
And looking on?
Old M. And looking on.
Tell. [*Putting the arrows into his quiver.*] 'Twill do!
He would dine after that, and say a grace.
Good heavens! to tear a man's eyes out, and then
Thank God! My staff! He'd have his wine, too. How
The man could look at it, and drink it off,
And not grow sick at the colour on't! Enough;
Put by the rest. [*To* EMMA, *who has brought him a bundle of arrows.*] I'll grow more calm.
My flask—I want it fill'd; and put provision
Into my pouch. I thank thee for that look!
Now seem'st thou like some kind o'er-seeing angel,
Smiling as he prepares the storm, that, while it
Shakes the earth, and makes its tenants pale,
Doth smite a pestilence. Thou wouldst not stay me?
Emma. No.
Tell. Nor thy boy, if I required his service?
Emma. No, William.
Tell. Make him ready, Emma.
Old M. No.
Not Albert, William.
Emma. Yes; even Albert, father.
Thy cap and wallet, boy—thy mountain staff,—
Where hast thou laid it? Find it—haste! Don't keep
Thy father waiting. He is ready, William.
[*Leading* ALBERT *up to* TELL.
Tell. Well done—well done! I thank you, love—I thank you!
Now mark me, Albert: dost thou fear the snow,
The ice-field, or the hail-flaw? Carest thou for
The mountain mist, that settles on the peak

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When thou'rt upon it? Dost thou tremble at
The torrent roaring from the deep ravine,
Along whose shaking ledge thy track doth lie?
Or faint'st thou at the thunder-clap, when on
The hill thou art o'ertaken by the cloud,
And it doth burst around thee? Thou must travel
All night.

Alb. I'm ready. Say all night again.

Tell. The mountains are to cross; for thou must reach
Mount Faigel by the dawn.

Alb. Not sooner shall
The dawn be there than I.

Tell. Heaven speeding thee!

Alb. Heaven speeding me!

Tell. Show me thy staff.—Art sure
O' the point? I think 'tis loose. No—stay—'twill do!
Caution is speed when danger's to be pass'd.
Examine well the crevice—do not trust
The snow! 'Tis well there is a moon to-night.
You're sure o' the track?

Alb. Quite sure.

Tell. The buskin of
That leg's untied. Stoop down and fasten it.
You know the point where you must round the cliff?

Alb. I do.

Tell. Thy belt is slack—draw't tight.
Erni is in Mount Faigel: take this dagger,
And give it him. You know its caverns well;
In one of them you'll find him. Bid thy mother
Farewell. Come, boy; we go a mile together.
Father, thy hand. [*Shakes hands with* OLD MELCTAL.

Old M. How firm thy grasp is, William!

Tell. There is a resolution in it, father,
Will keep.

Old M. I cannot see thine eye, but I know
How it looks.

Tell. I'll tell thee how it looks. List, father,
List. Father, thou shalt be revenged! My Emma,
Melctal's thy father; that's his home till I
Return. Yes, father, thou shalt be revenged!

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Lead him in, Emma, lead him in; the sun
Grows hot—the old man's weak and faint. Mind,
father,
Mind, thou shalt be revenged! In, wife—in, in.
Thou shalt be sure revenged! Come, Albert.
[EMMA *and* MELCTAL *enter the cottage.*—TELL *and* ALBERT *go out hastily.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A *Mountain with Mist.*

GESLER *is seen descending the Mountain with a hunting-pole.*

Ges. Alone, alone! and every step the mist
Thickens around me! On these mountain tracks
To lose one's way, they say, is sometimes death.
What hoa! holloa!—No tongue replies to me!
What thunder hath the horror of this silence!
I dare not stop—the day, though not half run,
Is not less sure to end his course; and night,
Dreary when through the social haunts of men
Her solemn darkness walks, in such a place
As this, comes wrapp'd in most appalling fear!
I dare not stop, nor dare I yet proceed,
Begirt with hidden danger. If I take
This hand, it carries me still deeper into
The wild and savage solitudes I'd shun,
Where once to faint with hunger is to die:
If this, it leads me to the precipice,
Whose brink with fatal horror rivets him
That treads upon't till, drunk with fear, he reels
Into the gaping void, and headlong down
Plunges to still more hideous death! Cursed slaves!

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To let me wander from them! [*Thunder.*] Hoa!—
Holloa!
My voice sounds weaker to mine ear; I've not
The strength to call I had, and through my limbs
Cold tremor runs, and sickening faintness seizes
On my heart! O heaven, have mercy! Do not see
The colour of the hands I lift to thee!
Look only on the strait wherein I stand,
And pity it! Let me not sink! Uphold,—
Support me! Mercy! mercy!

[*He leans against a rock, stupified with terror and exhaustion—it grows darker and darker—the rain pours down in torrents, and a furious wind arises—the mountain streams begin to swell and roar.* ALBERT *is seen descending by the side of one of the streams, which in his course he crosses with the help of his pole.*

Alb. I'll breathe upon this level, if the wind
Will let me. Ha! a rock to shelter me!
Thanks to't. A man, and fainting! Courage, friend,
Courage! A stranger that has lost his way—
Take heart—take heart; you're safe. How feel you
now? [*Gives him drink from a flask.*

Ges. Better.

Alb. You have lost your way upon the hill?

Ges. I have.

Alb. And whither would you go?

Ges. To Altorf.

Alb. I'll guide you thither.

Ges. You're a child.

Alb. I know
The way: the track I've come is harder far
To find.

Ges. The track you've come! What mean you? Sure
You have not been still farther in the mountains?

Alb. I've travelled from Mount Faigel.

Ges. No one with thee?

Alb. No one but God.

Ges. Do you not fear these storms?

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Alb. God's in the storm.
Ges. And there are torrents, too,
That must be cross'd.
Alb. God's by the torrent, too.
Ges. You're but a child.
Alb. God will be with a child.
Ges. You're sure you know the way?
Alb. 'Tis but to keep
The side of yonder stream.
Ges. But guide me safe,
I'll give thee gold.
Alb. I'll guide thee safe without.
Ges. Here's earnest for thee. [*Offers gold.*] Here—
I'll double that,
Yea, treble it, but let me see the gate
Of Altorf. Why do you refuse the gold?
Take't.
Alb. No.
Ges. You shall.
Alb. I will not.
Ges. Why?
Alb. Because
I do not covet it; and, though I did,
It would be wrong to take it as the price
Of doing one a kindness.
Ges. Ha!—who taught
Thee that?
Alb. My father.
Ges. Does he live in Altorf?
Alb. No, in the mountains.
Ges. How!—a mountaineer?
He should become a tenant of the city;
He'd gain by't.
Alb. Not so much as he might lose by't.
Ges. What might he lose by't?
Alb. Liberty.
Ges. Indeed!
He also taught thee that?
Alb. He did.
Ges. His name?
Alb. This is the way to Altorf, sir.

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Ges. I'd know
Thy father's name.
Alb. The day is wasting—we
Have far to go.
Ges. Thy father's name, I say?
Alb. I will not tell it thee.
Ges. Not tell it me!
Why?
Alb. You may be an enemy of his.
Ges. May be a friend.
Alb. May be; but should you be
An enemy——Although I would not tell you
My father's name, I'd guide you safe to Altorf.
Will you follow me?
Ges. Ne'er mind thy father's name:
What would it profit me to know't? Thy hand;
We are not enemies.
Alb. I never had
An enemy.
Ges. Lead on.
Alb. Advance your staff
As you descend, and fix it well. Come on.
Ges. What! must we take that steep?
Alb. 'Tis nothing. Come,
I'll go before—ne'er fear. Come on—come on!
[*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle of Altorf.*

Enter MICHAEL *and* JAGHELI.

Jag. Yes, Michael, so it stands: she only is
Step-daughter to the Seneschal. The less
Her debt of duty; which, though it were more,
She were absolved from by the tyrant's part
He acts, who'd wed her where she cannot love.
O, win her for me, Michael, or you'll have
To get a leech for me.
Mic. Get thee a leech? I'll be in want of one
Myself! Thy sickness is infectious. Would

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A scalded foot had kept me to the house—
A fever tied me to my bed—a fit
Tripp'd up my heels in the street, ere I had met thee
To make thee play the leech! I was as sound
As reckless laughter, then; could eat or drink
With him that ask'd me—could go here or there,
And find me ample fund of mirth, where'er
I went—could sing—could dance—could keep awake
Or sleep as well as any one! You've sped me!
Concluded me!—brought all my fair estate
Of rich content to melancholy end!
Jagheli, I'm in love.

Jag. In love!

Mic. In love.

Jag. Michael in love! What, prithee, made thee
In love? [fall

Mic. A cup of wine.

Jag. Another cup
Will work thy cure.

Mic. If thou couldst give me with't
The hand that help'd me to't, and with the hand
The lip that kiss'd the cup ere it touch'd mine.—
Nor was it yet the hand, nor yet the lip,
But the arch smile that quiver'd on that lip
And seem'd to mock the motion of that hand,
Moving in maiden coyness. Plague on't! I've
Been posed at mine own trade—proved an apprentice
With mine own tools: master'd, wherein I bragg'd,
To show my skill—and only by a smile
Half shown—you scarce could tell if it was there
Or not—a glimpse and gone, and then again
A glimpse and gone again, ere you could say
You saw it!—I'm in love. I have it here;
Here in the very centre of my heart!
That ever I should live to see the day
I said I was in love.

Jag. Psha! Michael! you've
Been only laughing till you've got a stitch
In the side.

Mic. A stitch! If thou hast such another,
It will not let thee sleep. But hither comes

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Thy lady's chamberlain, with dulcet voice,
To call thee to her. Now her father's out,
Make profit of thy calling, master leech,
Or follow it no more.

Enter BRAUN.

Braun. My lady says
She'll see you, sir ;—come this way.
Mic. Mind !
Jag. I will. [BRAUN *and* JAGHELI *go out.*
Mic. I'd like to try a race with him in love.
Can he compare with me in such a strife—
With me, could talk him dumb at any time ?
Ere he began to woo, I should be done—
But, to be done, a man must needs begin.

Enter AGNES, *unobserved by* MICHAEL.

Agn. What! mischief plotting?—'tis a graceful cheat!
Rogue as he is, the man's a man to love.
Mic. Hang modesty !
Agn. Well said : when it doth die,
No cousin goes of thine to put thee to
The charge of mourning.
Mic. I'll take heart and woo
Her soundly.
Agn. Love have pity on her, then.
Mic. This very hour I'll tell her I'm in love.
Agn. This very hour she'll tell thee thou'rt a fool.
Mic. I'll marry her in a week.
Agn. You'll wait, perhaps,
A little longer.
Mic. Nay, a week's too long ;
Three days from this.
Agn. Why not to-morrow, sir?
You'd be as near your wedding.
Mic. Send her now,
Kind Cupid—send her now. I'm in the mood
To woo her.
Agn. What if she's not in the mood to come ?
Mic. In such a mood, that were she marble,
I'd soften her—or ice, I'd make her melt.
Agn. O dear !

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Mic. Or steel itself, she should become
As gently ductile as the generous ore
Comes nearest to her worth, and yet not more
Than sums it half, although 'tis virgin gold!
Agn. I'll fly!—
Mic. Now, Cupid, now, I do defy her
In all her charms that vanquish'd at a sight,
By every arrow in thy quiver, boy,
If thou hast made me smart—she shan't go free;
So send her to me.
Agn. Nay, in sooth I'll stay.
Who ever fear'd a boaster?
Mic. Cupid, now!
Boy, I would stake my heart against thy wings,
I'd woo, and win, and wed her in a day!
Agn. [*Coming forward.*] O, sir, you are the youth
that brought the leech.
Mic. [*Confused.*] Ma'am?
Agn. And a pretty leech it is you've brought.
Mic. Ma'am?
Agn. He must needs have studied very hard,
To be so sapient and profound a one;
Where studied he, I pray you?
Mic. [*Stammers.*] Studied, ma'am?
Agn. Yes, studied! [*Imitating him.*] Thinkest thou
a leech is made
By only putting on the coat of one?
At such a rate, you would yourself be one,
Instead of his good trusty serving-man.
Mic. His serving-man!
Agn. Yes, sir, that pounds his drugs—
The half of which I wot are poisonous—
Makes ready his emplastrums—filthy things!
Boils his decoctions, and makes up his powders,
Ointments, and mixtures: I am sure I've seen you
In your working clothes, without that Sunday chin
You now have on, beating a tune upon
The leech's mortar—to the which you sung
In such melodious strain, that, one and all,
The passers-by did stop their ears, o'ercome
With surfeit of the sweetness.

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Mic. Madam,—I,—I—
Michael! Michael!
Are you a man?
Agn. What wages do you get,
Besides the blows the leech bestows on you,
When you forget to make his nostrums up,
Or mar them in the mixing?
Mic. Blows!
Agn. Ay, blows.
Come, come; don't look so fierce! you're just the man
To take them kindly, as, indeed, you should.
For I can read, sir, in your looks, you're dull
Of wit, and slow of comprehension; nor
Of memory careful in the hoarding of
That's trusted to it. If the worthy leech
But beats thee once a week, he's not more wise
Than patient.
Mic. [*Aside.*] Michael, thou hast found thy match!
But wilt thou yield without a struggle for't?
No! courage, Michael! Now or never, man! [*Struts up to* AGNES.] Ma'am!
Agn. Bless me, sir, perhaps I may be wrong!
And you are not his serving-man?
Mic. No, ma'am.
Agn. Nor anything under the leech?
Mic. No, ma'am.
Agn. Then, I will e'en make bold to tell you, sir,
I think the leech is just as much a leech
As you are.
Mic. Ma'am!
Agn. I've found him out, sir.
Mic. Have you?
Agn. And found out you—you shall be flay'd alive,
For passing him for a leech. A pretty way [sir,
To make my cousin well!
Mic. Your cousin, ma'am!
I took you for the lady's abigail.
Come, come, you are—or nature in her work
Shows little thrift, so fitting things for ends
They come not to—you are her abigail.
Agn. I vow I'm not.

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Mic. Your voice with which you vow
Doth vow you are.
Agn. My voice!
Mic. 'Tis of the pitch
To chill a lover's hope—that answers "no"
To all his sighs, which, when a maiden hears,
She straight bethinks her of a breaking heart.
My uncle had an abigail with just
Your voice.
Agn. Indeed?
Mic. Indeed! She was a match
For twenty lovers that my cousin had.
Not one of them could move her! Then your eye—
Agn. Ay, what of that?
Mic. Why such an eye should go
With such a voice. There's watchfulness in it.
'Twas made to pierce disguises, and to look
On pleading lovers, as on stocks and stones!
Agn. Your uncle's abigail, I guess, had such
An eye, too?
Mic. Yes—a little softer, though,
In its fire.—And then your dress!—
Agn. What of my dress? [*Angrily.*
Mic. Why, 'tis put on in perfect shrew-fashion,
Like armour, straight, and square, and stiff. It speaks
Defiance to male-kind. Were twenty-one
To put it on, 'twould look two-score. Wast thou
A beauty now, and teased with lovers, such
A dress as that would free thee from them all.
Agn. Art thou in earnest now?
Mic. In earnest! Yes.
I'll take an oath thou art her abigail,
As much as I'm the leech's serving-man,—
As much as he's the leech. Sweet, we are both
True serving-men to love: and you're the hire
I serve for. [*Catching her in his arms.*
Agn. [*Disengaging herself.*] Stay—who serves for hire doth wait
Till it be given him, ere he takes his hire,
Not helps himself.
Mic. But say you'll give me mine.

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Agn. Hush!—Some one comes.
Mic. I'm mute as faith
That's sworn to silence. Let me keep thy hand.
[*They retire near, and remain unseen by* BRAUN.

Enter BRAUN.

Braun. Now, Braun, whoever after calls thee "drone"
Doth lie, and men shall tell him so. Thou'rt wise,
Watchful, and keen of sight; canst see when all
The house besides, with open eyes, are blind—
Stone blind. Thou shalt no more be Braun the dolt,
The sluggard Braun, the hound, the hog, or Braun
The good-for-naught; or everything but Braun
Himself. Thou shalt be honest Braun—good Braun!—
Braun that can see a thing!—can find it out
Before the Seneschal!—brave Braun! The leech
Is but a cheat—my lady but a cheat,—
Her sickness all put on. He is to come
On Wednesday—no, to-day is Wednesday—no,
Wednesday was yesterday. He is to come——
I have forgot the day; no matter. I
Remember he's to come, and that's enough.
He is to come at——Plague upon the hour!
'Twas not at breakfast-hour, or dinner-hour,
Or any hour of meals or sleep—I'm sure
Of that; but then, what signifies the hour,
When I've forgot the day? Most true—most true;
A lucky thought. No matter what the hour,
Or what the day; 'tis what he purposed at
The hour and the day, concerns me to remember,
And that I don't forget. He is to come
To take away my lady mistress, who
Is nothing loth. Remember that, good Braun,
And make thy fortune with the Seneschal. [*Goes out.*

AGNES *and* MICHAEL *advance.*

Agn. Undone—undone! If thou remain'st, 'tis death!
Mic. And if I fly, what fly I to but death?
Agn. Nay, save thy life.
Mic. Thou art its precious breath,
And, parted from thee, 'tis no longer life.

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Agn. Could I believe thee!
Mic. If thou wouldst, thou couldst.
There lack of power is only lack of will.
Agn. Nay, say not so; in sooth, I've all the will.
Mic. Then here I plight my faith to thee!
Agn. Nay, hold!
Mic. 'Tis done, sweet maid, and cannot be recall'd;
So give me vow for vow. No sentinel
Keeps watch beneath the casement where you sleep:
There could I hang by aid of this kind night
A ladder; such a one as lovers find
Their way by to their mistress' arms, when doors
Are barr'd against them. Thou'rt not happy here:
This house of wolves is no abode for thee.
Let's to our friends, and briefly, ere we part,
Resolve the means and time for meeting, ne'er
To part again!
Agn. You'll take the abigail?
Mic. If you will take the leech's serving-man.
[*They go out.*

SCENE III.—*The Gate of Altorf.*

Enter GESLER *and* ALBERT.

Alb. You're at the gate of Altorf. [*Returning.*
Ges. Tarry, boy!
Alb. I would be gone; I am waited for.
Ges. Come back!
Who waits for thee? Come, tell me; I am rich
And powerful, and can reward.
Alb. 'Tis close
On evening; I have far to go! I'm late.
Ges. Stay! I can punish, too.
Alb. I might have left you,
When on the hill I found you fainting, and
The mist around you; but I stopp'd and cheer'd you,
Till to yourself you came again. I offer'd
To guide you, when you could not find the way,
And I have brought you to the gate of Altorf.
Ges. Boy, do you know me?

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Alb. No.
Ges. Why fear you, then,
To trust me with your father's name?—Speak.
Alb. Why
Do you desire to know it?
Ges. You have served me,
And I would thank him, if I chanced to pass
His dwelling.
Alb. 'Twould not please him that a service
So trifling should be made so much of!
Ges. Trifling?
You've saved my life.
Alb. Then do not question me,
But let me go.
Ges. When I have learn'd from thee
Thy father's name. What hoa! [*Knocks at the gate.*
Sentinel. [*Within.*] Who's there?
Ges. Gesler! [*The gate is opened.*
Alb. Ha, Gesler!
Ges. [*To the Soldiers.*]—Seize him! Wilt thou tell
Thy father's name? [me
Alb. No!
Ges. I can bid them cast thee
Into a dungeon! Wilt thou tell it now?
Alb. No!
Ges. I can bid them strangle thee? Wilt tell it?
Alb. Never!
Ges. Away with him! Send Sarnem to me.
[*Soldiers take off* ALBERT *through the gate.*
Behind that boy, I see the shadow of
A hand must wear my fetters, or 'twill try
To strip me of my power. I have felt to-day
What 'tis to live at others' mercy. I
Have tasted fear to very sickness, and
Owed to a peasant-boy my safety—Ay,
My life! and there does live the slave can say
Gesler's his debtor! How I loathed the free
And fearless air with which he trod the hill!
Yea, though the safety of his steps was mine,
Oft as our path did brink the precipice,
I wish'd to see him miss his footing and

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Roll over! But he's in my power!—Some way
To find the parent nest of this fine eaglet,
And harrow it! I'd like to clip the broad
And full-grown wing that taught his tender pinion
So bold a flight!

Enter SARNEM.

Ges. Ha, Sarnem! Have the slaves,
Attended me, returned?
Sar. They have.
Ges. You'll see
That every one of them be laid in fetters.
Sar. I will.
Ges. Didst see the boy?
Sar. That pass'd me?
Ges. Yes.
Sar. A mountaineer.
Ges. You'd say so, saw you him
Upon the hills; he walks them like their lord!
I tell thee, Sarnem, looking on that boy,
I felt I was not master of those hills.
He has a father—neither promises
Nor threats could draw from him his name—a father
Who talks to him of liberty! I fear
That man.
Sar. He may be found.
Ges. He must; and, soon
As found, disposed of! I can see the man.
He is as palpable to my sight, as if
He stood like you before me. I can see him
Scaling that rock; yea, I can feel him, Sarnem,
As I were in his grasp, and he about
To hurl me o'er yon parapet! I live
In danger, till I find that man! Send parties
Into the mountains, to explore them far
And wide; and if they chance to light upon
A father, who expects his child, command them
To drag him straight before us. Sarnem, Sarnem,
They are not yet subdued. Some way to prove
Their spirit!—Take this cap; and have it set
Upon a pole in the market-place, and see
That one and all do bow to it; whoe'er

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Resists, or pays the homage sullenly,
Our bonds await him! Sarnem, see it done.
[SARNEM *goes out.*
We need not fear the spirit that would rebel
But dares not:—that which dares we will not fear.
[*Goes out.*

SCENE IV.—*The Market-Place.*

Burghers and Peasants, with PIERRE, THEODORE, *and* Savoyards, *discovered.*

CHORUS.

Pie. Come, come, another strain.
The. A cheerful one.
Sav. What shall it be?
The. No matter, so 'tis gay.
Begin!
Sav. You'll join the burden?
The. Never fear.
Go on.

[Savoyard *plays and sings, during which* TELL *and* VERNER *enter, the former leans upon his bow, and listens gloomily.*

The Savoyard from clime to clime
Tunes his strain, and sings his rhyme;
And still, whatever clime he sees,
His eye is bright, his heart's at ease.
For gentle, simple—all reward
The labours of the Savoyard.

The rich forget their pride—the great
Forget the splendour of their state,
Whene'er the Savoyard they meet,
And list his song, and say 'tis sweet;
For titled, wealthy—none regard
The fortune of the Savoyard.

But never looks his eye so bright,
And never feels his heart so light,

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As when in beauty's smile he sees
His strain is sweet, his rhyme doth please.
Oh that's the praise doth best reward
The labours of the Savoyard!

But, though the rich retain'd their pride,
And though the great their praise denied,—
Though beauty pleased his song to slight,
His heart would smile, his eye be bright:
His strain itself would still reward
The labours of the Savoyard.

[*They shout, and laughingly accompany the Savoyards, who go out, with some of the crowd.*

Tell. What's the heart worth that lends itself to glee,
With argument like theirs for bitterness?
Or is't the melancholy sport of grief
To look on pleasures and to handle them,
That, when it lays the precious jewels down,
It may perceive its poverty the more?
Methinks those cheeks are not exactly dress'd
To please the hearts that own them.
Ver. Doubt it not.
They feel their thraldom.
Tell. So they should—that's hope—
I'd have it gall them—eat into their flesh!
While they do fester, there's a remedy;
But for your callous slave I know no cure!
To-morrow brings the test will surely prove them.
You'll not forget the hour.
Ver. Be sure I will not.
Tell. Erni is warn'd ere this; and Furst, I've said,
Is ready. Fare you well.
Ver. Stay, William! Now
Observe the people.

[*The people have gathered to one side, and look in the opposite direction with apprehension and trouble—those who had gone off return.*

Tell. Ha! they please me now—
That's honest—that's sincere. I still preferr'd
The seasons like themselves.—Let summer laugh,
But give me winter with a hearty scowl:

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None of your hollow sunshine—fogs and clouds
Become it best!—I like them now—their looks
Are just in season. There has surely been
Some shifting of the wind, upon such brightness
To bring so sudden lowering.

Ver. We shall see.

Pie. 'Tis Sarnem!

Tell. [*Looking out.*] What is that he brings with him?

Pie. A pole; and on the top of it a cap
That looks like Gesler's——I could pick it from
A hundred!

Tell. So could I!—My heart hath oft
Leap'd at the sight of it. What comes he now
To do?

Enter SARNEM, *with Soldiers, bearing Gesler's cap upon a pole, which he fixes into the ground; the people looking on in silence and amazement.*

Sar. Ye men of Altorf!
Behold the emblem of your master's power
And dignity. This is the cap of Gesler,
Your governor; let all bow down to it
Who owe him love and loyalty. To such
As shall refuse this lawful homage, or
Accord it sullenly, he shows no grace,
But dooms them to the penalty of bondage
Till they're instructed—'tis no less their gain
Than duty, to obey their master's mandate.
Conduct the people hither, one by one,
To bow to Gesler's cap.

Tell. Have I my hearing?

[*Peasants pass, taking off their hats and bowing to Gesler's cap.*

Ver. Away! Away!

Tell. Or sight?—They do it, Verner!
They do it!—Look!—Ne'er call me man again!
I'll herd with baser animals! They keep
Their stations. Still the dog's a dog—The reptile
Doth know his proper rank, and sinks not to
The uses of the grade below him.—Man!

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Man! that doth hold his head above them all,
Doth ape them all. He's man, and he's the reptile.
Look!—look! Have I the outline of that caitiff,
Who to the servile earth doth bend the crown
His God did rear for him to heaven?
Ver. Away,
Before they mark us.
Tell. No! no!—Since I've tasted,
I'll e'en feed on.
A spirit's in me likes it. Draw me not
Away! I swear I will not leave off yet;
I would be full—full—full! I will not budge,
Whatever be the cost!
[PIERRE *passes the cap, smiles, and bows slightly.*
Sar. What smiled you at?
Pie. You saw I bow'd as low as he did.
Sar. But
You smiled. How dared you smile?
Tell. Good!—good!
Sar. [*Striking him.*] Take that;
And learn when you do smile again, to do't
In season.
Ver. Come away.
Tell. Not yet—not yet.
Why would you have me quit the fare, you see,
Grows better and better?
Ver. You change colour.
Tell. Do I?
And so do you.
Sar. [*Striking another.*] Bow lower, slave!
Tell. Do you feel
That blow—my flesh doth tingle with't. Well done!
How pleasantly the knave doth lay it on!
Well done! well done! I would it had been I!
Ver. You tremble, William. Come, you must not stay.
Tell. Why not?—What harm is there? I tell thee, Verner,
I know no difference 'twixt enduring wrong
And living in the fear on't. I do wear
The tyrant's fetters, when it only wants

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His nod to put them on; and bear his stripes
When, that I suffer them, he needs but hold
His finger up. Verner, you're not the man
To be content because a villain's mood
Forbears. You're right—you're right! Have with you, Verner.

Enter MICHAEL.

Sar. Bow, slave. [TELL *stops and turns.*
Mic. For what? [*Laughs.*
Sar. Obey, and question then.
Mic. I'll question now, perhaps not then obey.
Tell. A man!—a man!
Sar. 'Tis Gesler's will that all
Bow to that cap.
Mic. Were it thy lady's cap,
I'd courtesy to it.
Sar. Do you mock us, friend?
Mic. Not I. I'll bow to Gesler, if you please;
But not his cap, nor cap of any he
In Christendom!
Tell. A man;—I say, a man!
Sar. I see you love a jest; but jest not now,
Else you may make us mirth, and pay for't too.
Bow to the cap.
Tell. The slave would humour him.
Holds he but out!
Sar. Do you hear?
Mic. I do.
Tell. Well done!
The lion thinks as much of cowering
As he does.
Sar. Once for all, bow to that cap.
Tell. Verner, let go my arm.
Sar. Do you hear me, slave?
Mic. Slave!
Tell. Let me go!
Ver. He is not worth it, Tell;
A wild and idle gallant of the town.
Tell. A man!—I'll swear, a man! Don't hold me, Verner.

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Verner, let go my arm!—Do you hear me, man?
You must not hold me, Verner.
Sar. Villain, bow
To Gesler's cap.
Mic. No—not to Gesler's self!
Sar. Seize him!
Tell. [*Rushing forward.*] Off, off, you base and hireling pack!
Lay not your brutal touch upon the thing
God made in his own image. Crouch yourselves;
'Tis your vocation, which you should not call
On free-born men to share with you, who stand
Erect, except in presence of their God
Alone!
Sar. What! shrink you, cowards? Must I do
Your duty for you?
Tell. Let them but stir——I've scatter'd
A flock of wolves that did outnumber them,—
For sport I did it. Sport!—I scatter'd them
With but a staff, not half so thick as this.
[*Wrests* SARNEM'S *weapon from him*—SARNEM *and Soldiers fly.*
What!—Ha!—Beset by hares! Ye men of Altorf,
What fear ye? See what things you fear—the shows
And surfaces of men! Why stand you wondering there?
Why look you on a man that's like yourselves,
And see him do the deeds yourselves might do,
And act them not? Or know you not yourselves?
That ye are men?—that ye have hearts and thoughts
To feel and think the deeds of men, and hands
To do them? You do say your prayers, and make
Confession, and you more do fear the thing
That kneels to God, than you fear God himself!
You hunt the chamois, and you've seen him take
The precipice before he'd yield the freedom
His Maker gave him; and you are content
To live in bonds, that have a thought of freedom,
Which Heaven ne'er gave the little chamois.
Why gaze you still with blanched cheeks upon me?
Lack you the manhood even to look on,

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And see bold deeds achieved by others' hands?
Or is't that cap still holds your thralls to fear?
Be free, then! There! Thus do I trample on
The insolence of Gesler! [*Throws down the pole.*

Sar. [*Suddenly entering with Soldiers.*] Seize him!

[*All the people, except* VERNER *and* MICHAEL, *fly.*

Tell. Ha!
Surrounded?

Mic. Stand!—I'll back thee!

Ver. Madman!—Hence! [*Forces* MICHAEL *off.*

Sar. Upon him, slaves!—Upon him all at once!
[TELL, *after a struggle, is secured and thrown to the ground, where they proceed to chain him.*] Now raise him.

[*They raise him, heavily chained, bursting with indignation, and breathless.*

Tell. Slave!

Sar. Rail on; thy tongue has yet its freedom.

Tell. Slave!

Sar. On to the castle with him—forward!

Tell. Slave! [*They go out.*

Re-enter MICHAEL, *still held by* VERNER.

Mic. There—there! They bear him off
In chains! Why held you me? What was my life,
To save that noble lion from the toils?

Ver. Michael, I knew thee not till now. I see
Thou art a man to trust. If thou wouldst free
That lion from the toils, there is a way.

Mic. Show't me.

Ver. Before this time to-morrow, Michael,
The cantons will be up in arms, and here
In Altorf.

Mic. Ha!—the tyrant's castle——

Ver. Yes.

Mic. Verner, thou hast saved a precious life to-day
In saving mine. Let's see: how many friends
Can I provide me with 'twixt this and night?

Ver. For what?

Mic. This night I mean to win a bride,
And marry her to-morrow.

Ver. Art thou mad?

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Mic. I am—why not? Who'd not be mad upon
The golden eve of his bright wedding-day?
Don't wonder at me, Verner. Do you see
Yon turret?
Ver. Yes.
Mic. Spy you a casement, too,
Just half-way up?
Ver. I do.
Mic. This night to me
That casement opens, and a cord, let down,
Takes up a hempen ladder, strong enough
For me to mount.
Ver. What then?
Mic. When I have won
The prize I venture for, and safe bestow'd,
What hinders ten or twenty of my friends—
What hinders them, I say, to lodge with me
This night in yonder tower? Come along;
I've scanty time to bid so many guests.
Come on; and, as we go, possess me of
Your plans, the minute you're to act upon them,
With all the rest. Don't wonder at me, man:
You'll bless the day that Michael took a wife.
[*They go out.*

END OF ACT III.

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ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber in the Castle.*

Enter GESLER, *with* RODOLPH, LUTOLD, GERARD, *and Officers.*

Ges. [*To* RODOLPH.] Double the guards. Stay! place your trustiest men
At the postern. Stop! You'd go with half your errand:
I'll tell you when to go. Let every soul
Within the walls be under arms; the sick
That do not keep their beds, or can rise from them,
Must take a weapon; if they can but raise
A hand, we've use for them. Away, now. Tumult
[RODOLPH *goes out.*
Under our very brows! The slaves will come,
In torrents from the hills, and, like a flood,
O'erwhelm us! Lutold, say our orders are,
On pain of death, no quarter shall be given.
Another word: let them be men this once,
I promise them the sacking of the town!
Without reserve, I give it them—of property
Or soul! I've nothing further, sir. [LUTOLD *goes out.*]
I'll raze
Their habitations, hunt them from their hills,
Exterminate them, ere I'll live in fear!
What word now? [*To* RODOLPH, *who re-enters.*

Rod. 'Twas a false alarm. The people
Paid prompt submission to your order: one
Alone resisted, whom they have secured,
And bring in chains before you.

Ges. So—I breathe
Again! 'Twas false, then, that our soldiers fled?

Rod. 'Twas but a party of them fled, my lord;
Which, reinforced, return'd, and soon o'erpower'd
The rash offender.

Ges. What! fled they from one?
A single man? How many were there?

Rod. Four,
With Sarnem.

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Ges. Sarnem! Did he fly?
Rod. He did;
But 'twas for succour.
Ges. Succour! One to four,
And four need succour? I begin to think
We're sentinel'd by effigies of men,
Not men themselves. And Sarnem, too! What kind
Of man is he can make a tiger cower?
Yea, and with backers! I should like to see
That man.
Rod. He's here.
Ges. I'm on the hills again!
I see their bleak tops looking down upon me,
And think I hear them ask me with a scowl
If I would be their master. Do not sheathe
Your swords!—Stand near me!—Beckon some of those
About me. I would be attended. If
He stirs, despatch him.
Rod. He's in chains, my lord.
Ges. I see—I see he is.

Enter SARNEM *and Soldiers, with* TELL *in chains.*

Sar. Down, slave!
Behold the governor. Down! down! and beg
For mercy!
Ges. [*Seated.*] Does he hear?
Sar. Debate it not.
Be prompt. Submission, slave! Thy knee—thy knee!
Or with thy life thou playest.
Rod. Let's force him to
The ground.
Ges. Can I believe my eyes? He smiles!
Ger. Why don't you smite him for that look?
Ges. He grasps
His chains as he would make a weapon of them
To lay the smiter dead. What kind of man
Is this, that looks in thraldom more at large
Than they who lay it on him?
Rod. Lo you how
The caitiff scowls! Pull out his eyes!

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Lut. Lop off
A limb for him.
Ges. A heart accessible as his to trembling
The rock or marble hath. They more do fear
To inflict than he to suffer. Each one calls
Upon the other to accomplish that
Himself hath not the manhood to begin.
Why don't they take him from my sight? Behold!
He has brought them to a pause; and there they stand
Like things entranced by some magician's spell,
Wondering that they are masters of their organs,
And not their faculties. They gaze on me
As one expected to perform a part
He doth forget to fill. [*Rises.*] They must not see
Me thus. Come, draw thy breath with ease—thou'rt
Gesler—
Their lord; and he's a slave thou look'st upon!
Canst thou not mulct the villain in his life?
Hast thou not tortures to requite him with?
'Tis only in the absence of thy wrath
He braves it. Let it show itself—at once
He's passive as the dust thou tread'st upon!
Why speak'st thou not?
Tell. For wonder.
Ges. Wonder!
Tell. Yes,
That thou shouldst seem a man.
Ges. What should I seem?
Tell. A monster!
Ges. Ha! Beware—think on thy chains.
Tell. Though they were doubled, and did weigh me
down
Prostrate to the earth, methinks I could rise up
Erect with nothing but the honest pride
Of telling thee, usurper, to the teeth,
Thou art a monster! Think upon my chains!
Show me the link of them, which, could it speak,
Would give its evidence against my word.
Think on my chains! They are my vouchers, which
I show to Heaven, as my acquittance from
The impious swerving of abetting thee

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In mockery of its lord!—Think on my chains!
How came they on me?
Ges. Darest thou question me?
Tell. Darest thou not answer?
Ges. Do I hear?
Tell. Thou dost.
Ges. Beware my vengeance!
Tell. Can it more than kill?
Ges. Enough—it can do that.
Tell. No; not enough:
It cannot take away the grace of life—
Its comeliness of look that virtue gives—
Its port erect with consciousness of truth—
Its rich attire of honourable deeds—
Its fair report that's rife on good men's tongues:
It cannot lay its hands on these, no more
Than it can pluck his brightness from the sun,
Or with polluted finger tarnish it.
Ges. But it can make thee writhe.
Tell. It may.
Ges. And groan.
Tell. It may; and I may cry.
Go on, though it should make me groan again.
Ges. Whence comest thou?
Tell. From the mountains. Wouldst thou learn
What news from them?
Ges. Canst tell me any?
Tell. Ay;
They watch no more the avalanche.
Ges. Why so?
Tell. Because they look for thee! The hurricane
Comes unawares upon them; from its bed
The torrent breaks, and finds them in its track—
Ges. What do they, then?
Tell. Thank heaven, it is not thou!
Thou hast perverted nature in them. The earth
Presents her fruits to them, and is not thank'd:
The harvest sun is constant, and they scarce
Return his smile: their flocks and herds increase,
And they look on as men who count a loss;
They hear of thriving children born to them,

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And never shake the teller by the hand;
While those they have, they see grow up and flourish,
And think as little of caressing them,
As they were things a deadly plague had smit:—
There's not a blessing Heaven vouchsafes them, but
The thought of thee doth wither to a curse,
As something they must lose—and richer were
To lack!

Ges. That's right! I'd have them like their hills
That never smile, though wanton summer tempt
Them e'er so much.

Tell. But they do sometimes smile.

Ges. Ay!—when is that?

Tell. When they do talk of vengeance.

Ges. Vengeance! Dare
They talk of that?

Tell. Ay, and expect it, too.

Ges. From whence?

Tell. From heaven.

Ges. From heaven?

Tell. And the true hands
Are lifted up to it on every hill
For justice on thee.

Ges. Where's thy abode?

Tell. I told thee—in the mountains.

Ges. How lies it—north or south?

Tell. Nor north, nor south.

Ges. Is't to the east or west, then?

Tell. Where it lies
Concerns thee not.

Ges. It does.

Tell. And if it does, thou shalt not learn.

Ges. Art married?

Tell. Yes.

Ges. And hast a family?

Tell. A son.

Ges. A son!
Sarnem!

Sar. My lord, the boy!

[GESLER *signs to* SARNEM *to keep silence, and whispering, sends him off.*

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Tell. The boy!—what boy?
Is't mine?—and have they netted my young fledgeling?
Now Heaven support me, if they have! He'll own me,
And share his father's ruin! But a look
Would put him on his guard—yet how to give it!
Now, heart, thy nerve: forget thou'rt flesh—be rock!
They come—they come!
That step—that step—that little step, so light
Upon the ground, how heavy does it fall
Upon my heart! I feel my child!—'Tis he!
We can but perish.

Enter SARNEM *with* ALBERT, *whose eyes are riveted on Tell's bow, which* SARNEM *carries.*

Alb. [*Aside.*] 'Tis my father's bow,
For there's my father. I'll not own him, though.
Sar. See!
Alb. What?
Sar. Look there.
Alb. I do; what would you have
Me see?
Sar. Thy father.
Alb. That is not my father.
Tell. My boy—my boy!—my own brave boy! He's safe!
Sar. [*Aside to* GESLER.] They're like each other.
Ges. Yet I see no sign
Of recognition to betray the link
Unites a father and his child.
Sar. My lord,
I'm sure it is his father. Look at them:
That boy did spring from him, or never cast
Came from the mould it fitted. It may be
A preconcerted thing 'gainst such a chance
That they survey each other coldly thus.
Besides, with those who lead the mountain life,
The passions are not taken by surprise
As ready as with us. They do commune
From day to day with nature's wonders, till
They see her very terrors without awe,

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And catch from her stern and solemn look,
That e'en their joy seems thoughtful.
Ges. [*Rises.*] We shall try.
Lead forth the caitiff.
Sar. To a dungeon?
Ges. No;
Into the court.
Sar. The court, my lord?
Ges. And send
To tell the headsman to make ready. Quick!
The slave shall die! You mark'd the boy?
Sar. I did.
He started—'tis his father.
Ges. We shall see.
Away with him!
Tell. Stop!—stay!
Ges. What would you?
Tell. Time,—
A little time to call my thoughts together.
Ges. Thou shalt not have a minute.
Tell. Some one, then,
To speak with.
Ges. Hence with him!
Tell. A moment—stop!
Let me speak to the boy.
Ges. Is he thy son?
Tell. And if
He were, art thou so lost to nature as
To send me forth to die before his face?
Ges. Well, speak with him. Now, Sarnem, mark them well. [ALBERT *goes to* TELL.
Tell. Thou dost not know me, boy; and well for thee
Thou dost not. I'm the father of a son
About thy age: I dare not tell thee where
To find him, lest he should be found of those
'Twere not so safe for him to meet with. Thou,
I see, wast born, like him, upon the hills;
If thou shouldst 'scape thy present thraldom, he
May chance to cross thee; if he should, I pray thee
Relate to him what has been passing here,
And say I laid my hand upon thy head,

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And said to thee—if he were here, as thou art,
Thus would I bless him : Mayst thou live, my boy,
To see thy country free, or die for her
As I do !
Sar. Mark !—He weeps.
Tell. Were he my son,
He would not shed a tear : he would remember
The cliff where he was bred, and learn'd to scan
A thousand fathoms' depth of nether air ;
Where he was train'd to hear the thunder talk,
And meet the lightning eye to eye ! Where last
We spoke together—when I told him death
Bestow'd the brightest gem that graces life,
Embraced for virtue's sake,—he shed a tear !
Now, were he by, I'd talk to him, and his cheek
Should never blanch, nor moisture dim his eye,—
I'd talk to him——
Sar. He falters.
Tell. 'Tis too much !
And yet it must be done ! I'd talk to him——
Ges. Of what ?
Tell. [*Turns to* GESLER.] The mother, tyrant, thou dost make
A widow of ! I'd talk to him of her. [*Turns to* ALBERT.
I'd bid him tell her, next to liberty,
Her name was the last words my lips pronounced :
And I would charge him never to forget
To love and cherish her, as he would have
His father's dying blessing rest upon him !
Sar. You see, as he doth prompt, the other acts.
Tell. [*Aside.*] So well he bears it, he doth vanquish me.
My boy ! my boy !—O, for the hills—the hills,
To see him bound along their tops again,
With liberty, so light upon his heel,
That, like the chamois, he flings behind him——
Sar. Was there not all the father in that look ?
Ges. Yet 'tis against nature.
Sar. Not if he believes
To own the son would be to make him share
The father's death.

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Ges. I did not think of that.
I thank thee, Sarnem, for the thought. 'Tis well
The boy is not thy son: I've destined him
To die along with thee.
Tell. To die! For what?
Ges. For having braved my power, as thou hast.
Lead
Them forth
Tell. He's but a child.
Ges. Away with them!
Tell. Perhaps an only child.
Ges. No matter.
Tell. He
May have a mother.
Ges. So the viper hath;
And yet who spares it for the mother's sake?
Tell. I talk to stone! I talk to it as though
'Twere flesh, and know 'tis none. No wonder: I've
An argument might turn as hard a thing
To flesh—the softest, kindliest flesh, as e'er
Sweet Pity chose to lodge her fountains in.—
But I do talk to stone. I'll talk to it
No more. Come, my boy,
I taught thee how to live—I'll show thee how
To die——
Ges. He is thy child!
Tell. [*Embraces* ALBERT.] He is my child!
Ges. I've wrung a tear from him! Thy name?
Tell. My name?
It matters not to keep it from thee, now:
My name is Tell.
Ges. Tell!—William Tell?
Tell. The same.
Ges. What! he so famed 'bove all his countrymen
For guiding o'er the stormy lake the boat?
And such a master of his bow, 'tis said
His arrows never miss!—Indeed—I'll take
Exquisite vengeance!—Mark! I'll spare thy life,
Thy boy's, too.—Both of you are free—on one
Condition.
Tell. Name it.

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Ges. I would see you make
A trial of your skill with that same bow
You shoot so well with.
Tell. Name the trial you
Would have me make.
Ges. You look upon your boy
As though instinctively you guess'd it.
Tell. Look
Upon my boy!—What mean you? Look upon
My boy as though I guess'd it! Guess'd the trial
You'd have me make! Guess'd it
Instinctively! You do not mean—No—No—
You would not have me make a trial of
My skill upon my child! Impossible!
I do not guess your meaning.
Ges. I would see
Thee hit an apple at the distance of
A hundred paces.
Tell. Is my boy to hold it?
Ges. No.
Tell. No!—I'll send the arrow through the core!
Ges. It is to rest upon his head.
Tell. Great Heaven,
Thou hear'st him!
Ges. Thou dost hear the choice I give—
Such trial of the skill thou'rt master of,
Or death to both of you, not otherwise
To be escaped.
Tell. Oh, monster!
Ges. Wilt thou do it?
Alb. He will! he will!
Tell. Ferocious monster! Make
A father murder his own child!
Ges. Take off
His chains, if he consents.
Tell. With his own hand!
Ges. Does he consent?
Alb. He does.

[GESLER *signs to his officers, who proceed to take off* TELL'S *chains,* TELL *all the while unconscious of what they do.*

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Tell. With his own hand!—
Murder his child with his own hand!
The hand I've led him, when an infant, by!
'Tis beyond horror—'tis most horrible!
Amazement!—'Tis too much for flesh and blood
To bear—men should be made of steel to stand it:
And I believe I am myself about
To turn to some such thing; for feeling grows
Benumb'd within me, that I seem to lose
Almost the power of hating him, and keep
A calm, when heaven and earth give warrant for
A tempest. [*His chains fall off.*] What's that you have done to me?
Villains! [*To the Guards.*] put on my chains again. My hands
Are free from blood; and have no gust for it
That they should drink my child's!—Here!—here!—I'll not
Murder my boy for Gesler.
Alb. Father—father!
You will not hit me, father!
Tell. Hit thee!—Send
The arrow through thy brain—or, missing that,
Shoot out an eye—or, if thine eye escapes,
Mangle the cheek I've seen thy mother's lips
Cover with kisses!—Hit thee!—Hit a hair
Of thee, and cleave thy mother's heart. Who's he
Asks me to do it?—Show him me,—the monster!
Make him perceptible unto my reason
And heart! In vain my senses vouch for him;
I hear he lives—I see it—but it is
A prodigy that nature can't believe!
Ges. Dost thou consent?
Tell. Give me my bow and quiver.
Ges. For what?
Tell. To shoot my boy!
Alb. No father! no,
To save me!—You'll be sure to hit the apple.
Will you not save me, father?
Tell. Lead me forth,—
I'll make the trial!

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Alb. Thank you!
Tell. Thank me!—Do
You know for what?——I will not make the trial,
To take him to his mother in my arms,
And lay him down a corse before her!
Ges. Then
He dies this moment; and you certainly
Do murder him, whose life you have a chance
To save, and will not use it.
Tell. Well—I'll do it:
I'll make the trial.
Alb. [*Runs up to* TELL *and embraces him.*] Father!
Tell. Speak not to me:
Let me not hear thy voice—thou must be dumb;
And so should all things be—earth should be dumb!
And heaven—unless its thunders mutter'd at
The deed, and sent a bolt to stop it! Give me
My bow and quiver!
Ges. When all's ready.
Tell. Well!
Lead on! [*They go out;* TELL *guarded.*

SCENE II.—*Without the Castle.*

Enter, slowly, several Citizens, as if observing something following them, VERNER, *and* THEODORE.

Ver. The pace they're moving at is that of men
About to do the work of death. Some wretch
Is doom'd to suffer. Should it be my friend—
Should it be Tell!
The. No doubt 'tis some good man.
Ver. Poor Switzerland! poor country! Not a son
Is left to thee that's worthy to be one.
'Tis not a common man, with such parade,
They lead to death: I count four castellains
Already.
The. There's a fifth.
Ver. And Sarnem, too!
Do you see him?

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The. Yes: and Gesler follows him.
Who can it be?
Ver. We'll see. He's coming, now—
'Tis William Tell!
The. Verner, do you know the boy
That follows him?
Ver. A boy! It is his son!
What horror's to be acted? Do you see
The headsman?
The. No! I see no headsman there,
No apparatus for the work of death.
Perhaps they're not to suffer!
Ver. Lo you how
The women clasp their hands, and now and then
Look up to heaven! You see that some do weep.
No headsman's there; but Gesler's at no loss
For means of cruelty because there lacks
A headsman!

Enter PIERRE.

Pie. Horrible!—most horrible
Decree!—To save his own and Albert's life,
Tell is to shoot an apple from the head
Of his own child!

Enter, slowly, Burghers and Women, LUTOLD, RODOLPH, GERARD, SARNEM, GESLER, TELL, ALBERT, *and a Soldier bearing Tell's bow and quiver—another with a basket of apples—Soldiers, &c.*

Ges. That is your ground. Now shall they measure thence
A hundred paces. Take the distance.
Tell. Is
The line a true one?
Ges. True or not, what is't
To thee?
Tell. What is't to me? A little thing,
A very little thing—a yard or two,
Is nothing here or there—were it a wolf
I shot at! Never mind.
Ges. Be thankful, slave,
Our grace accords thee life on any terms.

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Tell. I will be thankful, Gesler! Villain, stop!
You measure to the sun.
Ges. And what of that?
What matter, whether to or from the sun?
Tell. I'd have it at my back.—The sun should shine
Upon the mark, and not on him that shoots.
I cannot see to shoot against the sun—
I will not shoot against the sun!
Ges. Give him his way!—Thou hast cause to bless
my mercy.
Tell. I shall remember it. I'd like to see
The apple I'm to shoot at.
Ges. Show me
The basket!—There—
Tell. You've pick'd the smallest one.
Ges. I know I have.
Tell. O! do you?—But you see
The colour on't is dark—I'd have it light,
To see it better.
Ges. Take it as it is:
Thy skill will be the greater if thou hitt'st it.
Tell. True—true—I didn't think of that—I wonder
I did not think of that.—Give me some chance
To save my boy! I will not murder him
If I can help it—for the honour of
The form thou wear'st, if all the heart is gone.
Ges. Well! choose thyself.
[*Hands a basket of apples*—TELL *takes one.*
Tell. Have I a friend among
The lookers on?
Ver. Here, Tell!
Tell. I thank thee, Verner!
He is a friend runs out into a storm
To shake a hand with us. I must be brief.
When once the bow is bent, we cannot take
The shot too soon. Verner, whatever be
The issue of this hour, the common cause
Must not stand still. Let not to-morrow's sun
Set on the tyrant's banner.—Verner! Verner!
The boy!—the boy!—Think'st thou he has the courage
To stand it?

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Ver. Yes.
Tell. Does he tremble?
Ver. No.
Tell. Art sure?
Ver. I am.
Tell. How looks he?
Ver. Clear and smilingly.
If you doubt it—look yourself.
Tell. No—no—my friend,
To hear it is enough.
Ver. He bears himself
So much above his years—
Tell. I know!—I know.
Ver. With constancy so modest—
Tell. I was sure
He would—
Ver. And looks with such relying love
And reverence upon you—
Tell. Man! Man! Man!
No more! Already I'm too much the father
To act the man!—Verner, no more, my friend!
I would be flint—flint—flint. Don't make me feel
I'm not—you do not mind me!—Take the boy
And set him, Verner, with his back to me.—
Set him upon his knees—and place this apple
Upon his head, so that the stem may front me—
Thus, Verner; charge him to keep steady—tell him
I'll hit the apple!—Verner, do all this
More briefly than I tell it thee.
Ver. Come, Albert!
Alb. May I not speak with him before I go?
Ver. No—
Alb. I would only kiss his hand.
Ver. You must not.
Alb. I must!—I cannot go from him without!
Ver. It is his will you should.
Alb. His will, is it?
I am content, then—come.
Tell. My boy! [*Holding out his arms to him.*
Alb. My father! [*Running into* TELL'S *arms.*
Tell. If thou canst bear it, should not I?—Go now,

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My son—and keep in mind that I can shoot.—
Go, boy—be thou but steady, I will hit
The apple. [*Kisses him.*] Go!—God bless thee—go.—
My bow! [SARNEM *gives the bow.*
Thou wilt not fail thy master, wilt thou?—Thou
Hast never fail'd him yet, old servant.—No.
I'm sure of thee—I know thy honesty,
Thou'rt stanch—stanch—I'd deserve to find thee treacherous,
Could I suspect thee so. Come, I will stake
My all upon thee! Let me see my quiver.

Ges. Give him a single arrow.

Tell. Do you shoot?

Lut. I do.

Tell. Is't so you pick an arrow, friend?
The point, you see, is bent, the feather jagg'd;
That's all the use 'tis fit for. [*Breaks it.*

Ges. Let him have
Another.

Tell. Why, 'tis better than the first,
But yet not good enough for such an aim
As I'm to take. 'Tis heavy in the shaft:
I'll not shoot with it! [*Throws it away.*] Let me see my quiver.
Bring it! 'tis not one arrow in a dozen
I'd take to shoot with at a dove, much less
A dove like that? What is't you fear? I'm but
A naked man, a wretched naked man!
Your helpless thrall, alone in the midst of you,
With every one of you a weapon in
His hand. What can I do in such a strait
With all the arrows in that quiver? Come,
Will you give it me or not?

Ges. It matters not.
Show him the quiver. You're resolved, I see,
Nothing shall please you.
[TELL *kneels and picks out an arrow.*

Tell. Am I so?—That's strange,
That's very strange!—See if the boy is ready.

Ver. He is.

Tell. I'm ready too!—Keep silence, for

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Heaven's sake, and do not stir—and let me have
Your prayers—your prayers—and be my witnesses,
That if his life's in peril from my hand,
'Tis only for the chance of saving it.
Now, friends, for mercy's sake, keep motionless
And silent.

[TELL *bends his bow, and fixes the arrow—As he raises the bow to take aim, one of the spectators drops lifeless—*TELL *lowers the bow.*

Tell. Do you see?

Ges. Away with him!—
Go on!

[*He raises the bow again, and, when he has brought it to his eye, a woman shrieks, and falls fainting in the arms of another.*

Tell. Do you hear?

Ges. Remove her, slaves. Go on!

Tell. I will.

[TELL *shoots, and a shout of exultation bursts from the crowd.* TELL'S *head drops on his bosom; he with difficulty supports himself upon his bow.*

Ver. [*Rushing in with* ALBERT.] Thy boy is safe; no hair of him is touch'd!

Alb. Father, I'm safe—your Albert's safe. Dear father,
Speak to me! speak to me!

Ver. He cannot, boy!

Alb. You grant him life?

Ges. I do.

Alb. And we are free?

Ges. You are.

Alb. Thank Heaven! thank Heaven

Ver. Open his vest,
And give him air.

[ALBERT *opens his father's vest, and an arrow drops—*TELL *starts, fixes his eyes on* ALBERT, *and clasps him to his breast.*

Tell. My boy! my boy!

Ges. For what
Hid you that arrow in your breast? Speak, slave!

Tell. To kill thee, tyrant, had I slain my boy!

Ges. My guards! secure him!

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Tell. Tyrant! every hill shall blaze
With vengeance.
Ges. Slaves, obey me!
Tell. Liberty
Shall at thy downfall shout from every peak!
Ges. Away with him! [*Guards seize him.*
Tell. My country shall be free!
[*They drag* TELL *out.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Gesler's Castle—A Lake in view.*

Enter GESLER, RODOLPH, *and Officers.*

Ges. How say you?—Uri in commotion?—
Rod. Yes;
Our scouts report on sure intelligence.
Ges. Well, what of Uri? [*Calling.*] Sarnem! [*To* RODOLPH.] Go, patrole
The town, and take especial note of all
You see, and straight report to Sarnem! [*Exit* RODOLPH.] Sarnem!

Enter SARNEM.

Sar. My lord.
Ges. The bark—is't ready? hurry it!
And lead him from his dungeon. [SARNEM *goes out.*] He shall change
His prison for a stronger; then, perhaps,
I'll rest.
Yet wherefore should he break my rest,
As though my chamber portal he beset,
Instead of pining in my deepest dungeon,
With full assistance of my bolts and bars,
And all my guards to boot? Upon my couch

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I throw myself, and do not know its down
From flint, for any softness that it lends
My wearied spirits—all with thought of him!
Or, if I close my eyes, sleep only draws
Her curtain round my thoughts, to shut them in
With restlessness, from which they turn to watching
As to refreshment. Then I'm on the hills,
And he is with me there, their master: at
His call, the clouds do gather, and let loose
Their thunders on me, till I'm deafen'd with
Their din, and feel their lightnings blasting me!
The dark ravine then opens at my feet,
And down I splash into the torrent, where
The cataract begins its fearful leap,
That drags me over with't. Or on the brink
He sets me of the cliff, and makes me scan
The mountain's base, that lies direct below,
Too deep for eye to bear; till, with the sight
Maddening, I spring into the void, and straight
Go spinning down the air,—that, when I wake,
Convulsed for very lack of breath, I can't
Believe but still I'm falling.

Re-enter SARNEM.

Sar. Now, my lord——
Ges. [*Catching hold of him.*] Sarnem!
Sar. My lord, what moves you?
Ges. We are so
Beset with traitors, Sarnem, we forget
The voices of our friends. The bark is ready?
Sar. It is, my lord.
Ges. Our prisoner, too? That's well!
What kind of night?
Sar. Clear starlight;—not a breath of wind.
Ges. That's strange!
Sar. My lord?
Ges. I say, 'tis strange
The night should be so calm. I'm glad of it,
And yet I marvel at it. I did look
To find it was o'ercast; 'tis very strange!
Why should I look for frowns to the mild night

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That seems disposed to send me none? What's that?
[*Noise of wind and distant tempest.*
Sar. The wind is rising.
Ges. Did I not say it, Sarnem?
Sar. You did, my lord.
Ges. The night will be a rough one.

Re-enter RODOLPH.

Rod. Lutold, my lord, reports the town is quiet,
Save that the burghers frequent pass from house
To house, with looks that argue restless
And brooding discontent. [RODOLPH *goes out.*
Ges. Is this revolt? [*Louder wind.*
You'll see the guards are trebled, Sarnem. Hark!
Now you may hear the wind!
Sar. 'Twill be a storm.
My lord, 'twere well you ventured not yourself;
Those lakes are dangerous at night; the course
Is long.
Ges. No, Sarnem; I must see yon slave
Disposed myself. My castle on the lake's
Impregnable; I'll take him there, and plan
Some means of signal punishment, to check
The spirit of revolt. The storm I fear
Is that we carry with us. Tell's the cloud
From which I dread a thunderbolt! Besides,
He is a hostage worth my life. [*Aside.*] The boy
Remains—should they attempt the castle, lead him
To the walls; and threaten them, if once a bow
Is bent, to sacrifice him in their sight.

Re-enter RODOLPH.

Rod. My lord, we've news of gatherings in the hills!
Ges. A storm, indeed, is rising. Come, the boat.
[GESLER *and Officers go out.*
Sar. They're fairly off. The wind's against them; but
It blows a gentle, though a fitful breeze.
I would not be in Gesler's place.
Rod. Why so?
Sar. Something will chance to-night.
Rod. Why think'st thou so?

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Sar. I know not why. The look he gave before
He left us—did you mark it, Rodolph?
Rod. Yes.
Sar. I never saw a look like that. It lower'd
To very darkness. Fate was in that look.
Come, Rodolph, to our charge. We must prepare
To meet a storm to-night. [*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*Supposed to be in the Vicinity of the Castle.*

Enter WALDMAN *and* MICHAEL.

Wal. I sore mistrust thee, Michael. If thou play'st
The trifler with me now——
Mic. Dear father, fear not.
Wal. But I do fear thee, boy; and, if not thee,
I fear this stormy night. Dost hear the thunder?
Mic. I do; but it is distant.
Wal. There again!
Mic. It sounds in the direction of the lake.
Wal. Why hast thou brought me hither?
Mic. Worthy sire,
Thou said'st I'd never marry till my teeth
Were gone. To show thee, to thy heart's content,
The prophecy was wrong, I've brought thee hither
To help me to take home my gentle bride,
Whom thou shalt see anon.
Wal. He's past all hope.
Am I thy but to play a jest upon?
Is this a place to jest?
Mic. No place more safe;
No sentinel is here to mar a jest,
Were I disposed for one.
Wal. The storm is on.
Wouldst hold me here to bide this pelting storm?
Mic. Dear father, hush, unless you'd spoil my wedding,
And mar the only chance of making me
A sober man. And, look, my bridesmen come.

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Enter JAGHELI *and a band of Young Men with a rope-ladder.*

Mic. Welcome, Jagheli! Father, my chief man,
Who means to take example by your son—
Marry a wife, and ever after live
The gravest man in Altorf.
Wal. Let me see
Thy bride, and I'll believe thou mean'st to wed.
It cannot be! There's not a man in Altorf
Would take thee for his son-in-law!
Mic. No man
In Altorf shall say son-in-law to me.
Wal. Where wilt thou get thy bride, then?
Mic. Thou shalt see.
Ha! there's the light—Jagheli, that's the casement.
Come on! Friends, stay you here. And, father, pray
Command your patience, till I give you proof,
Such as shall full content you, that I mean
With all my heart to be a married man.
[MICHAEL *and* JAGHELI *go out.*
Wal. Friends, can you help me to a clue to find
This riddle out?
The. We're sworn to secrecy,
And may not answer you.
Wal. I see—I see—
He's not content to make a jest of me,
But brings his friends to join him in the laugh.
He wed!—He take a wife!—He bring some boy,
Dress'd in his sister's gown and tucker, with
His voice upon the crack—to pass him for
His bride upon me. I'll begone, and balk
[*More thunder.*
His most irreverent mirth! Good night, my friends;
I give you joy of this fair night. [*Going.*

Enter MICHAEL *and* AGNES—JAGHELI *and* ANNELI.

Mic. Most trusting love,
Fear not; I'll give thee to safe warding, till
I take thee to mine own. Fair Anneli,
Go with thy cousin. Father, to thy care
We trust these jewels, that shall keep us rich

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For life! Don't wonder, sweet—there's not a care
To-night doth cost thee, but each after-day
Shall bring as many golden joys as hours
To pay thee for.
Ann. I trust they mean us honest.
Wal. A woman, as I live!
Agn. Honest or not,
No matter now, dear coz; our fortune's told—
We're caught!
Wal. A woman, too!
Mic. By hands so kind!—
So loving in their tendance on their prize,
You'd not take freedom for captivity.
Agn. Don't try us!
Mic. Not unless you choose.
Ann. Dear coz!
Let us go back.
Agn. Nay, coz, we'll e'en go on.
These gallants trusted once, to trust them on,
They say, is sometimes to secure the debt.
Wal. Fair lady, I will be your bond, to see
Due payment made—if you will take me for't.
Mic. Dear father, when you hear me jest again,
You'll drink your grandson's health that is to be,
And pardon me for him.—Away!—Away!
These heads do ask a kinder canopy
Than this rough sky affords.
Wal. Go you not with us?
Mic. No; our brides forbid.
Nor may we see them till we bring the priest
To visit them to-morrow; and, besides,
We've comrades here, bright gallants, as ourselves
Were once, of whom we'd take a handsome leave.
This night, that parts us thus, we will forgive,
For the fair fellows that shall follow it.
Good night—sound sleep—sweet dreams—good night
—good night—
[WALDMAN, AGNES, *and* ANNELI, *go out.*
Now, friends, the casement; there the ladder hangs;
Climb fast and silently. The chamber on
The postern opens, and is lock'd within:

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Thence we can watch the motions of our friends,
And at the moment lend our sudden aid,
When it can most avail.—On—on and up!
[*Young Men go out.*
Now, Michael, here's the closing of thy jests,
Or making of thee!—Fortune hold thy friend,
There's not a sober man in Altorf but
Would wear thy brows, for all their cap and bells!
[*Goes out.*

SCENE III.—*A Mountain, with a view of the Lake Lucerne.*

Enter EMMA, *leading* OLD MELCTAL.

Old M. I keep thee back?
Emma. No.
Old M. I am sure I do.
Emma. And if you do, it matters not—we've gain'd
The cliff. Should Erni come, how lies the track
From this he'll take?
Old M. The lake's in view.
Emma. It is.
Old M. Then set me fronting it. Now, as I point,
See'st thou the shoulder of a wooded hill
That overlooks the rest?
Emma. I see it well.
Old M. Another hill's in front of it?
Emma. There is.
Old M. His track lies o'er the verge of that same hill,
And so exact from this, what moves upon't
Is plainly seen betwixt the sky and you.
Discern you aught upon't?
Emma. I think I do.
Yes—yes, I do. There, father, there!—O, father!
Forgive me that the mother and the wife
Forgot your eyes were out!
Old M. Thou mayst forget

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What I forget myself with care for thee.
What dost thou see upon that hill, my child?
Emma. Figures of men in motion; but as dim
As shadows yet.
Old M. 'Tis Erni! O that I
Had eyes to see the shadow of my child.
O bless'd are they that see!—They twice embrace
The precious things they love.—If it be they,
They'll soon be here.
Emma. Too late, I fear, too late,
To save my husband and my child. Why fled
The churl soon as he told us they were in
The tyrant's power?
Old M. Blame not his haste, my child;
'Twas sure for good.
Emma. I see a bark upon
The lake. How oft has William crossed that lake!
He'll cross it ne'er again.
Old M. Have hope—have hope.
Emma. Father!
Old M. My child!
Emma. I think I see the gleam
Of lances in the bark—I'm sure I do!
Old M. Likely, my child: the tyrant and his guards
Perhaps are there. He has a hold, you know,
Upon the lake—a castle, stronger far
Than that at Altorf.
Emma. Father—father!
Old M. What?
What moves you so, my child?
Emma. The form of him
Who steers the bark is like—
Old M. Like whose?
Emma. My husband's!
Yes—yes! 'Tis William!—So he holds the helm,
I'd know him at the helm from any man
That ever steer'd a bark upon the lake!
I fear—I fear!—
Old M. What is't you fear, my daughter?
Is't the lake?
Emma. No, no! The lake is rough,

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Chafed with the storm of yesternight—'tis rough;
But 'tis not that I fear. What business have
The lances in that bark? What's that he does?
He steers her right upon a rock!—'Tis in
Despair! and there he'll die before my eyes!—
Ha! what!—What's that? He springs upon the rock!
He flies!—he's free!—but they pursue him! Stay
Old M. What wouldst thou do, my child? [here.
Emma. Fly to his aid.
Old M. Alas! what aid can you afford to him?
Emma. Cling to the foremost of his murderers.
Old M. And help them so to surely stop his flight.
Would he not cling to you?
Emma. Alas! he would.
What should I do?
Old M. See how our friends come on.
If it was they, they should be nearer now.
Emma. They are!—They are!
Old M. Let's haste to meet them, then.
The track—the track! Is't this way? Come, my child:
I'll show thee where—if thou wilt stand, and wave them,
They're sure to see thee. Let us trust to them
For aid. Don't look behind. Come on—come on!
[*They go out.*

Enter TELL, *from an eminence.*

Tell. Whene'er I choose, I have the speed of them.
Nor dare they shoot: so oft as they prepare,
If I but bend my bow, the terror of
The deadly aim alone transfixes them,
That down they drop their weapons by their sides,
And stand at gaze, with lapsed power, as though
In every heart an arrow from my bow
Stood quivering. I knew that beetling cliff
Would cost them breath to climb. They top it now.
Ha! [*Bends his bow.*] Have I brought you to a stand again?
I'll keep you there, to give your master time
To breathe. Poor slaves! no game are you for me;

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But could I draw the tyrant on that shrinks
Behind you.—There he is! I'll take yon crag,
From which a leap, they dare not take, at once
Enables me to distance them, and there
Bring him to parley. [*Ascends the crag.*

Enter Archers and Spearsmen, followed by GESLER.

Ges. Wherefore do you fly?

Tell. Wherefore do you pursue me? Said you not
You'd give me liberty, if through the storm
I safely steer'd your prow? The waves did then
Lash over you; your pilot left the helm;
I took it, and they rear'd their heads no more,
Unless to bow them and give way to me,
And let your pinnace on. You did repeat
Your promise, as you trembling lay along
The bottom of the bark, and scann'd the looks
Of your pale crew, that shrunk, while fiercer wax'd
The fury of the wind, and to its height
The roaring of the angry thunder rose,
Through which I brought you as through savage foes,
My friends, that for my sake forbore. You twice
Promised me liberty. I only take
What you did promise.

Ges. Traitor, 'twas your place
To wait my time.

Tell. It would have been, had I
Believed that time would come. If I'm a prize
Worthy to take, why hang you thus behind
Your minions? Why not lead the chase yourself?
Lack you the manhood e'en to breast the sport
You love?

Ges. Transfix the slave with all your darts
At once.

Tell. Ha.

[*Takes aim again—they drop their weapons, which they had half raised.*

Follow me! Keen huntsmen they
The game itself must urge. Keep up the chase!
[*He rushes from the rock.*

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Ges. You keep too close together. Spread yourselves,
That some of you may hit him unawares.
His quiver full of ducats to the man
That brings him down. On, cowards—on, I say!
[*They go out.*

SCENE IV.—*The outside of Gesler's Castle—the Draw-bridge up—the ducal banner of Austria hoisted—the ramparts lined with Archer and Spearsmen.*

SARNEM, RODOLPH, GERARD, *and* LUTOLD, *on the top of an advanced bastion.—In the front,* VERNER, THEODORE, *and* PIERRE, *with Burghers and* FURST, *with Mountaineers, all armed.*

Sar. [*On the bastion.*] What means this hostile show?
Speak, burghers, why
Before these walls assemble ye in arms?
Ver. To drive the spoilers of our country from
Their hold, avenge her cruel wrongs, and set
Her children free!
Sar. Be warn'd in time;—disperse!—
Your homes! your homes! or not a man of you
But treads upon his grave.
Ver. Take warning thou!
Of thee and every soul that with thee bides
That castle is the tomb, unless you straight
Surrender William Tell!—Is he alive?—
Give up our countryman—we'll treat with thee
For but the sake of sparing human blood!
Sar. Traitor, he is not here.
He lives—but for your threat, to show you what's
Its weight—Behold his son!
[ALBERT *is led forward by the Headsman, with a drawn sword.*
And heed how he's
Attended!—Mind! the gnomon's on the hour:
If, when it rings, a single soul remains
Of those rebellious bands, the headsman does
His office.—Mark me further, renegade!

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Gesler is at his castle on the lake,
Where lies thy countryman, in chains last night
Transported thither—whom the torture hath
Confess'd—The governor is master of
Your plans; and, reinforced, is on his way—

TELL *rushes in, followed by* ERNI *and Mountaineers.*

Tell. Villain, 'tis false!—Alive thou ne'er shalt see
Thy master more!—An arrow from his bow
Hath felt the last throb of the tyrant's heart.
Proceed to the assault.

Ver. See! William—see!

Sar. A single arrow drawn, he dies.

Tell. [*Confused.*] How's this?

Ver. Yes, William, 'tis thy son. I know not how
He fell into their power,

Tell. I see him not!—
I see my country, Verner, not my son!
She holds her arms to me—with piteous cries,
Recounts her children's wrongs—shows me the hands
Of free-born sons, festering in chains—the locks
Of hoary parents steep'd in their own blood;
And tangled tresses of her daughters, torn
By hands that did despoil them of the gem
Life has no price to name for. I've no son,
Ye men of Switzerland! Look there, and see
Your tyrant's hold—who'll draw an arrow first?
Will none dispute the glory of the deed
With Tell?—There, then!

[TELL *shoots, and the Headsman falls—the hour is rung*—MICHAEL, JAGHELI, *and their friends, rush out upon the ramparts, and some secure* SARNEM *and his Officers, while others rapidly lower the portcullis*—TELL, *entering the fortress over the bridge, with his friends, strikes down the Austrian banner, and, hurrying on, receives* ALBERT *from* MICHAEL.—*Enter, on each side,* EMMA, *and* OLD MELCTAL, AGNES, ANNELI, *and* WALDMAN.

Tell. My country's free!
Save what is shed, we win

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A bloodless victory. We'll temper vengeance
With mercy.—Austrians, you'll quit a land
You never had a right to, and you'll learn
A country's never lost that hath a son
To wrestle with a tyrant who'd enslave her.
[*A burst of exultation from the Swiss.*

END OF WILLIAM TELL.

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ALFRED THE GREAT;

OR,

The Patriot King:

AN HISTORICAL PLAY.

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Dedicated

(BY PERMISSION)

TO

HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,

WILLIAM THE FOURTH,

A PATRIOT MONARCH,

DESTINED, WITH THE BLESSING OF GOD, TO RESTORE THE DILAPIDATED FABRIC OF HIS COUNTRY'S PROSPERITY;

AND

TO RESCUE A DEVOTED PEOPLE FROM THE RAVAGES OF THE WORST OF INVADERS—

CORRUPTION.

June, 1831.

Hosted by Google

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT DRURY LANE, IN 1831.)

ENGLISH.

Alfred, King of England	MR. MACREADY.
Oddune	MR. J. VINING.
Oswith	MR. H. WALLACK.
Edric	MR. YOUNGE.
Egbert	MR. THOMPSON.
Kenric	MR. COOKE.
Edwy	MR. SINCLAIR.
Oswald	MR. CATHIE.
Arthur	MR. EATON.
Edgar	MR. HONNER.
Edwin	MR. FENTON.
Conrad	MR. HAMMERTON.
Ethelred	MISS MARSHALL.
Soldier	MR. DOWSING.

Elswith, The Queen	MISS HUDDART.
Maude	MRS. C. JONES.

DANES.

Guthrum	MR. COOPER.
Amund	MR. BLAND.
Oscar	MR. C. JONES.
Haldane	MR. HOWARD.
Otho	MR. YARNOLD.
Soldier	MR. HOWELL.
Priest	MR. S. JAMES.
Boy	MR. FENTON.

Ina, Guthrum's Daughter	MISS PHILLIPS.
Edith	MISS FAUCIT.

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ALFRED THE GREAT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Danish Camp.*

Enter EDITH *with a bow and quiver, followed by* INA *attended by a* Boy, *who carries a bow and quiver.*

Edith. Come, let us see who'll hit the target first.
Ina. My bow hath got a cast, and will not shoot.
Edith. In sooth your bow hath got no cast at all,
'Tis true as mine. Take mine—I'll shoot with it.
Ina. Your's fits me not—'tis harder far to draw.
Edith. Try it.
Ina. No, no; I will not shoot to-day.
Besides, my arrows all have lost the nock.
Edith. Here's store enough of mine.
Ina. Good Edith, no;
Entreat me not—I will not shoot to-day.
Edith. Why, so 'twas yesterday; fie, Ina, fie!
To tax thy bow with fault it never had.
The bow that hath a cast is thy changed will,
Thy nockless shafts are marr'd alone by that.
You wont to love this sport; from morn till night
Your pastime 'twas, and now you love it not!
What love you, sweet, instead?
Ina. What should I love?
Edith. Nay, Ina—you alone can answer that.
Has Otho's suit prevail'd?
Ina. When did a flower
Spring from a weed, that love should grow from hate?

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Edith. What! call you love a flower? A flower looks gay—
So looks not love! A flower is sweet—who says
That love is sweet? Does sweetness garner pain
For those that own it? Rather love's a weed
Oft taken for a flower—found out at last
With a sigh! O, Ina, you have pluck'd this weed!
Come, own it, Ina!

Ina. Wherefore do you look
Thus at me?

Edith. Why do you, my Ina, look
At anything but me? Why do your eyes
Of late their lustre lavish on the ground,
That cares not for it? And your honey'd breath,
That should be given to your silver tongue
To make rich music of, why do you waste
Oftener on thankless and contentless sighs?
Come, tell me, Ina, what has happen'd to you?

Ina. Alas! I know not.

Edith. Do you say alas!
O, then, 'tis over with you! Why, you're in tears;
Only the drop's but half way out, that soon
Would make way for the rest, held not your eye
Its crystal door upon it! Lean your head
Upon the bosom of your friend, and give
Your secret vent—for sure you have one, Ina!

Ina. Not I!—Come, take your bow!—I'll shoot with you!
My quiver 'gainst a shaft, I'll be the first
To hit the mark. Set up the target, boy?

[Boy *goes out.*

Now for the eye of the eye. In sooth I've miss'd
Wide by a mile—but thou hast shot full home!
I've pluck'd it, Edith, flower or weed. If weed,
O! weed most like a flower.—O precious weed!
There's not a flower so fair, I'd deem thee graced
To call thee by its name!

Boy *(running in).*

The battle's won!
I see our troops come winding up the glen,

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Their spears and banners wreath'd—a token sure
Of victory. [*Goes out.*
Edith. Let's meet them, Ina :—Come !
Why sweet, what's this ? How pale you turn ! How damp's
Your little hand ! Nay, now 'tis snow indeed.
Cold as 'tis white ! Did you not rightly hear ?
He says the battle's won !
Ina. I know he does.
Edith. Is't with such cheeks you listen to such news ?
This would become the daughter of the foe.
Ina. The foe ! The foe !
Edith. What ! find'st thou something sweet
In that harsh word, that thou repeat'st it thus ?
Ina. Harsh word ! now, harsh art thou to call it so ;
Jars it thine ear ? there's music in't to mine.
Stands it for what thoud'st shun ? that's what I'd seek :
Yea ! 'fore the things that brother, sister, friend—
Soft titles—stand for ! Ina loves a foe ;
That foe has lost the battle we have won.
Edith. Why sweet, where sawest thou this gentle foe ?
Ina. Even here. When last the Saxon ask'd a truce,
Curious to see their herald, I remain'd
Behind you in my father's tent. He came !
O, with what grace of richest manhood ! Proud
His gait, yet bearing onwards looks so bland
As made all hearts give willing way to him.
He spake, and I took root to where I stood,
And so did all. Not Guthrum moved : O Edith :
How should it be with Ina ? Where were her eyes ?
What were her ears about ? What did her heart ?
Dost feel it throbbing now ? 'Tis quiet now
To what 'twas then ! How often have you tried
To fix your naked eye upon the sun :
And when you've ta'en it off, how has the day,
From gazing his bright face, been turn'd to night ;
Flowers, verdure, darken'd ; yea, the orb himself
From burning gold, grown ink. 'Twas so with me
When sight of him was gone ! Night turn'd to day

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Again with you—but light's gone out with Ina
E'er since the day she look'd upon her foe!
Edith. Hence, Ina, hence a while! your father comes;
He must find looks of welcome.
Ina. Have with you.
You've won my secret, Edith! Guard it for me.
[*They go out.*

Enter GUTHRUM, AMUND, OSCAR, HALDANE, *and Danes.*

Guth. Halt, comrades, halt! and change your toil for rest,
And then from rest to feasting! We'll carouse
A moon for this last victory, that leaves
No future foe to front us. England's won;
So thinn'd her sons by this last overthrow,
And utterly discomfited, enow
Remain her not to make another stand
Durst Alfred rally them—their throneless king!
We shall not need to cross the main again
To prop us with fresh succours. Here we'll build
Another Danish kingdom, fairer far
Than what we've left. What, ho there! bring me wine;
I'm thirsty from our march. Ho! wine, I say!
A seat! Here, in the open air, we'll drink,
Or ere we part, to our new Denmark. Chief
And followers shall pledge me. Wine I say!

Enter OTHO.

Otho. Guthrum, your priests prepare a sacrifice.
The God expects his victims, shall he have them?
Guth. Take them! you know the God must have his due! [OTHO *goes out.*
Give him the wine! my thirst's gone off—yet, no;
'Tis fit that I drink first [*Drinks*]. To our new Denmark!
By Odin! 'twas a glorious victory!
The God deserves his victims—he shall have them!
Odin's the God of war! If he drinks blood,
He has a right. Who dares deny the God
His victims? Amund, take the cup! We fought
Like Odin's sons. I saw you, Amund, cleave
In twain a Saxon at a single blow.

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Am. My Lord, 'twas slight to what your falchion did,
That through the casqued head and mailed chine
Made way at one dire wheel!
Guth. Ay, did it so?
I do believe it did! No more of that.
Give me your hand, good Amund—for that blow
Lord of a gallant castle shalt thou be.
Pass on the cup to Oscar. Oscar! ha!
Show me thy falchion's edge—Look, Amund, here—
I saw him keep at once five Saxon swords
At bay! Well done!—Oscar, be sure you sit
On my right hand at banquet.
Osc. Mighty chief,
I mark'd your eye was on me; 'twas a sword
That more than balanced all the odds against me!
Besides, your arm just then had turn'd the fight
That seem'd at first against us.
Guth. Was it so?
I don't remember it. Good Oscar, ask
What portion of the spoil thou wilt—'tis thine!

OTHO *re-enters.*

Otho. The victims, Chief, are ready.
Guth. So! enough!
Otho. Eight of them did we take by lot,—the ninth
Is self-devoted to preserve the life
Of one, to whom we were about to hold
The fatal urn.
Guth. Indeed! a chief?
Otho. The port
Of both bespeaks them men of proud degree.
Guth. Have 'em before us; we would see them.
[OTHO *goes out.*] Guthrum
Loves war! He'd leave the banquet any time
To mingle in the fight. He loves a friend;
But more than friend's embrace, he loves the hug
Foe gives to foe. Yet is not Guthrum cruel;
His foe disarm'd he never yet could smite.
He loves a noble deed, although the sword
Achieves it not. How say you, friends, were't right
To save the man, who loves his friend so well,

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He lays down life for him—although a gift
To Odin?
Am. Ere the Priest his sacred hand
Lays on the victim, it has still been lawful
To snatch him from his doom!
Hal. Behoves him though
To swear eternal league with Odin's sons.
Guth. He'll do it, Haldane! Ha! I saw thee matched
In fight, for once. That Saxon found thee, Haldane,
With two that back'd thee, livelier work than suits
A sluggard's hand. Thy seconds both were down.
Was't not so, Haldane? And thyself, methinks,
Madest rather backward way, when I despatch'd
Fresh aid to thee, with charge, at any risk,
To take thy gallant foe alive. 'Twas you,
Oscar, that I so charged.
Osc. My liege, he lives;
O'ercome by force that could not make him yield,
But bore him down to earth, where, as he lay,
The strife his fetter'd limbs were forced to drop;
His eye continued still, that shot around
Deadly defiance in the face of death.
Guth. Foe worthy Guthrum's sword. Was't not the herald,
Last sent us from the English king?
Osc. The same.
Guth. I'd like to see that man again.
Osc. He's here!

Enter OTHO, *with* OSWITH *and* EDRIC *chained.*

Guth. This he!—Men's looks reflect their deeds as well
As natures. One of these is he, whose thought
Of lofty friendship overlooks himself,
When fix'd on his friend's need—This is the man!
Otho. It is, my Lord.
Guth. Is he thy friend, whose life
Thou count'st a thing so precious, thou would'st give
Thine own to purchase it?
Os. He is.

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Guth. What rich
And heavy debt hast thou incurr'd to him,
To pay so large return as takes thy all?
Os. And think'st thou friendship barters kindnesses?
'Tis not because that such or such a time
He help'd my purse, or stood me thus or thus
In stead, that I go bound for him, or take
His quarrel up! With friends, all services
Are ever gifts, that glad the donor most.
Who rates them otherwise, he only takes
The face of friend to mask a usurer.
I give my life for him, not for the service
He did me yesterday, or any day,
But for the love I bear him every day,
Nor ask if he returns!
Guth. Be Guthrum's friend.
Thou livest, and thy friend for sake of thee.
Edr. O, generous proffer!
Os. Would'st accept it?
Edr. Yes.
Os. Then do.
Guth. Remove their chains.
Os. First take off his.
Guth. Now thine!
Os. Long as my country wears your chains,
Guthrum, beware how you unrivet mine;
For once you set my arm at liberty,
The thing which first 'twill seek will be a sword,
To right my master, royal Alfred's cause—
And strike my injured country's fetters off!
Guth. Saxon, beware! The smooth and gentle tide
Of mercy thwarted, turns a torrent, oft
O'erwhelming as the raging flood itself
Of vengeance.
Os. Here I stand—let it come down!
I care not when or where its fury rushes!

Enter INA *and* EDITH *(as yet unperceived by* GUTHRUM, *&c.)*

Ina. [*Aside to* EDITH.] 'Tis he!
Guth. Is Guthrum braved!—Is he the son
Of Odin!—Marches in his van the God

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Of War!—Lies o'er the humbled necks of hosts
Of prostrate foes his path; and brooks he thus
Defiance, and from one earth sprung—the spawn
Of the vile clod he treads on? Stood thy king
Alfred, of whom thou vaunting spokest, stood he
Where now thou stand'st, his regal eye had fallen
Beneath the frown of Guthrum.
Os. Not beneath
The frown of Guthrum's god, were Odin real
As he is fabled!
Guth. Give him to the God!
Ina. Father!
Guth. My Ina!
Os. Ha! could I believe
He was not born of earth—there were, indeed,
An argument could make me.
Guth. I have given thee
Thy choice of life or death—thou choosest death,
And take it.
Ina. Father!
Guth. Ah, thou ever art
My sweet and welcome calm, that glads me, sun-like,
When summer days are breathless with the joy
Of his enriching beam.—I'm smooth again!
Not a ruffle! not a ruffle!—Is he not gone? Hence
Ina. No, no, my father! [with him!
Guth. Would'st thou have me set
Afoam again!—Nay, Ina, if I rage,
'Tis not at thee!—Why start away from me?
Come back, and cling to me again! close, close!—
My child, beloved and only, tell me, if
Thou canst, how much I love thee!
Otho. Saxon, come.
Ina. No, no!
Guth. How, Ina!
Ina. Thou didst not repeat
Thy order.
Guth. But I will.
Ina. O, speak to me!—
I'm glad the fight is o'er. You won it soon!
You won it safely, else it were not won!

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How stood the plume I fasten'd on your crest?
Well, well! How many eyes were on that plume,
Tossing, as proud it rose the stormy wave
Of battle, still the more majestical
The fiercer wax'd the swell!
Guth. My child, my child!
Ay, every inch my own.—When thou wast born,
I wish'd a son. I would not give thee now
For troops of them!—What, Otho!—
Ina. Your scarf!—Is't whole?
No, no, a rent is here. Come, take it off.
False as it is, you shall not wear't again!
I'll knit you another, every loop of which
I'll fasten with a spell, that it shall prove
An amulet against the thrust of spear,
Or stroke of falchion!
Guth. So you shall! You make
A child of your father! Otho!
Ina. Not a wound!
For ever in the thickest of the fight,
And not a wound! Thank Odin! Yet I would
There were a slight one—for the 'tending on't!
No! no! and yet in sooth I would there were!
I know not what I say! I prate! I prate!
Thank Odin, you are safe!
Guth. My girl! my girl!
My idle girl! my foolish, loving child!
My Ina! What! and have I won the fight,
And shalt not thou become the richer for't.
By Odin, but thou shalt! Come, ask me something!
Name me some gift. Come, measure, if thou canst,
Thy father's love for thee! What wilt thou ask?
Ask me a kingdom! Come?
Ina. No kingdom, father,
I'd ask of thee—only one little boon.
Guth. What is't? Speak out!
Ina. Is't granted?
Guth. By the God!
Out with't—What is't? What little boon is this
Which only wants the naming, to be thine,
And yet thou seem'st to lack the breath to name.

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Ina. Is that a rivet of your armour broke ?
No, no !
Guth. And if it were, no blame to it.
It turn'd an English javelin. At my feet
The weapon fell : I snatch'd it up again,
And sent it hissing at its master's head !

Enter Soldier.

Soldier. This packet, found we, Guthrum, in the tent
Of Alfred.
Guth. Bring'st no tidings of himself ?
'Tis certain that he left the field unhurt !
Have they return'd whom in pursuit of him—
Soldier. They have. Three days they track'd him ; on the fourth
All trace of him was lost ; but, by report,
Alone—without a single follower,
The royal fugitive pursues his way,
Broken in hopes, as fortunes.
Guth. We may chance
To overtake, or light upon him yet.
Give me the paper.

[*Takes the packet, and reads.*

Os. Such things I have heard of—angel forms
Enchantment raises—mocking fairest things
Of earth, but fairer—to entrance earth's sons—
Things they would deem of heaven, though found on earth !
Which, once beheld, their helpless functions seize
With ravishment, that leaves them but the power
To gaze or listen, till no warning effort
Of reason, or stronger will avails, to tear
The charmed sense away !
Edr. Would I were chained
Again ! Her pity makes rich freedom poor,
That can't awaken it.
Guth. [*returning packet.*] It matters not
A string of Saxon rhymes. Can Alfred fight ?
Who flourishes the pen so much, can scarce
Be master of the sword ! He plays the harp,
So they report. The harp ! Give me the strain

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Of the resounding shield! Come, Ina, name
The boon thou'dst ask.
Ina. When thou art happy, what
Most wishest thou?
Guth. That happiness may last.
Ina. No, no! not that. Thou wishest others happy.
Guth. I do! I do!
Ina. And so do I. When I
Am happy, I'd have all things like me—not
That live and move alone, but even such
As lack their faculties. Then could I weep,
That flowers should smile without perception of
The sweetness they discourse. Yea, into rocks
Would I infuse soft sense to fill them with
The spirit of sweet joy, that everything
Should thrill as I do. Then, were I a queen,
I'd portion out my realms among my friends,
Unstud my crown for strangers, and my coffers
Empty in purchasing from foes their frowns,
Till I had bought them out; that all should be
One reign of smiles around me. I am happy
To-day—to-day, that brings thee back to me,
The hundredth time, in triumph and in safety!
This day, that smiles so bounteous upon Ina,
She'd wish to smile e'en upon Ina's foe—
Let not the Saxon die!
Guth. He lives!—My child!
What makes thee gasp?
Ina. How near—how near to you
Was death that day! 'Twas well for Ina that
Your armour proved so true. She had not else
A father now to ask a boon of, and
To get it soon as ask'd!
Guth. He lives thy slave!
Had he been wise, he now were Guthrum's friend.
Ina. His chains—
Guth. 'Tis thine to take them off or not.
What Guthrum gives, he gives! He is thy slave.
Come Saxon, thou art free!

[GUTHRUM *and Chiefs go out.*

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Edr. Would I were chain'd
Again. [*Goes out.*

Os. I gaze, and with my tranced eyes
Drink magic in. I know it, still I gaze.
And yet can bane reside in aught so sweet?
Can poison lodge in that consummate flower,
Which blends the virtues of all blooming things,
And with the wealth of its fair neighbourhood,
Enriches very barrenness, that near it
Grows sightly, e'en, and sweet?

Ina. How's this, my Edith?
My wish obtain'd, I tremble to enjoy;
I need but speak the word, and he is free:
Yet, there I let him stand in shackles still,
Whose chains to doff, were there no other way,
I'd go in bonds myself.—Sweet, be my tongue;
Bid them remove his chains.

Edith. Unbind him, there!

Soldier. My hand is useless, from the fight to-day.

Ina. Try you.

Edith. [*trying to take off his chains.*] It baffles me!
It hath a knack
I am not mistress of.—Will you not try?
[Ina *approaches, and takes off his chains.*
You've done't.—Why, what's the matter with you, Ina?
Hast put his fetters on, that here you stand
As though bereft of motion? Rouse thee, Ina!

Ina. O, for a minute, Edith, in thy bosom,
To weep there! Ay, to weep!—to shed such tears
As shower down smiling cheeks, when sudden joy
Pours in to the o'erfilling of the heart,
That look'd not for't, and knows not what to do
With all its treasure!

Os. I do feel it still!
Still do I feel the touch of her fair hand!
How passing fair! The driven snow itself
Might make as white a one; but then, again,
As cold as that is glowing! Who will loose
The fetters it puts on? Or, who that wears them,
Would sigh for the embrace of liberty!

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Truth! honour! all is lapsed. O, for a foe
To taunt me now!—O, for a flourish of
The Danish trump—or would their banners come
And flout me!

Ina. Saxon, will you follow us?

Os. I come, sweet maid! What am I but your slave,
To follow, though I leave all else that's bright?
[*They go out.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A wild tract of Country on the border of a Wood.*

Enter ELSWITH, *in wretched attire, presently followed by* CONRAD.

Con. No farther!

Els. Yes!

Con. Alas! I can no more.
My lapsed strength constrains my limbs to play
The traitor to you!

Els. What! and thou fall off?
Well! I am left at last alone! Old man,
Think not that I'd upbraid thee. Thanks to thee
For what thou'st done, for what thou canst not do
No blame to thee, but pity for thee! More
I know my desolation is thy loss
Than mine! back, prithee, to the hut we've left;
Thou hast strength enough to crawl there.

Con. What I have
I'll turn to worthier profit. [*Makes a violent effort, and snatches hold of her robe.*] Oh! my loved,
My honour'd mistress! do not tempt these wilds,
Where hunger turns its aching eyes around
In vain! where prowls perchance the savage wolf!
Where—

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Els. Peace! talk terror to the dead! Not less
Would'st thou be heeded. I've a heart as dull,
Except one fear—one hope—to find my Alfred,
Or search for him in vain. There I'm alive!
There only! Counsel should not come from thee,
Whose tongue persuaded what thy arm enforced,
Desertion of my child! whose fate to avert,
A mother's duty 'twas; or, else, to share!
And now thou'dst urge desertion of his sire!
I wonder not thy limbs are weak—thy heart
Not in the cause! and yet it is a King's!
But thou'rt his subject only; I'm his wife—
So doubly—trebly true. Back to the hut!
They'll take compassion on thee! Fare thee well!

Con. Nay, pause in mercy! See who comes—alas!
Should they be Danes!—Yon thicket will conceal us—
For thy own safety!—come!—Alas, the help
I'd give, I stand myself in need of most! [*They retire.*

Enter EDWY, ARTHUR, *and other Saxons.*

Edwy. We've rounded now the forest on the East,
And by the sun, our friends should meet us soon
Who gird the other side. A halt a while.

Arth. But should we meet the King—if still he lives
Nor yet is captured, as 'tis rumour'd—he
May pass our band unknown; by none of us
Ever beheld except at distance, when
He marshall'd us, to lead us 'gainst the foe.

ELSWITH *rushes forward.*

Els. Seek ye your King?

Edwy. Who art thou?

Els. I'll be your leader
Until you find him!

Arth. She's distracted.

Edwy. Yes.
That can't be reason's light which shines so strong
In her unquiet eye—that misses naught,
Yet rests on nothing!

Els. I command you, Sirs,
On your allegiance follow me. Obey
Your Queen!

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Arth. Our Queen?
Edwy. You mark! A Queen indeed,
If frenzy ever made one! Arthur, come,
Our friends will mock us, should they chance to reach
The point agreed upon before us.
[EDWY *and party go out.*
Els. Stay!
Con. [*Appearing, and struggling to advance.*] Stay, countrymen! It is indeed your Queen.
Alas! they hear me not! my tongue hath wax'd
As feeble as my limbs. [*Leans against a tree.*
Els. Why, let them go!
They are not half the band that I have here
In loyalty to my liege, wedded lord!
With that I'll seek him, under Heaven's high guard!
Yea, though I search the quarters of the foe!
In that find strength—find courage! That my food,
My rest! Farewell, old man! Heaven shelter thee!
And be thy mistress' guide! [*Goes out.*
Con. Stay!—Hear me!—Stay!
I'll drag my limbs along to follow thee. [*Goes out.*

SCENE II.—*A Hut.*

ALFRED *discovered trimming some arrows, with an unfinished bow beside him*—MAUDE *kneading flour for cakes.*

Maude. [*Aside.*] Ay, there he's at his work! if work that be
Which spareth toil. He'll trim a shaft, or shape
A bow with any archer in the land,
But neither can he plough, nor sow!—I doubt
If he can dig—I am sure he cannot reap—
He has hands and arms, but not the use of them!
Corin!
Alf. Your will?
Maude. Would thou couldst do my will
As readily as ask it! Go to the door;
And look if Edwin comes. Dost see him?
Alf. No.

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Maude. Bad omen that! He'll bring an empty creel;
Else were he home ere now. Put on more wood;
And lay the logs on end; you'll learn in time
To make a fire. Why, what a litter's there,
With trimming of your shafts that never hit!
Ten days ago you kill'd a sorry buck;
Since when your quiver have you emptied thrice,
Nor ruffled hair nor feather.
Alf. If the game
Are scarce and shy, I cannot help it.
Maude. Out!
Your aim I wot is shy, your labour scarce;
There's game enow, would'st thou but hunt for them;
And when you find them, hit them. What expect'st
To-day for dinner?
Alf. What Heaven sends!
Maude. Suppose
It sends us nought?
Alf. Its will be done!
Maude. You'd starve;
So would not I, knew I to bend a bow,
Or cast a line. See if thou hast the skill
To watch these cakes, the while they toast.
Alf. I'll do
My best.
Maude. Nor much to brag of, when all's done!
[*Goes out.*
Alf. [*solus.*] This is the lesson of dependence. Will
Thankless, that brings not profit;—labour spurn'd,
That sweats in vain; and patience tax'd the more,
The more it bears. And taught unto a king—
Taught by a peasant's wife, whom fate hath made
Her sovereign's monitress. She little knows
At whom she rails; yet is the roof her own;
Nor does she play the housewife grudgingly.
Give her her humour! So! How stands the account
'Twixt me and fortune?—We are wholly quits!—
She dress'd me—She has stripp'd me!—On a throne
She placed me—She has struck me from my seat!
Nor in the respect where sovereigns share alike

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With those they rule, was she less kind to me—
Less cruel! High she fill'd for me the cup
Of bliss connubial—She has emptied it!
Parental love she set before me too,
And bade me banquet; scarce I tasted, ere
She snatch'd the feast away! My queen—My child!—
Where are they? 'Neath the ashes of my castle!
I sat upon their tomb one day—one night!
Then first I felt the thraldom of despair.
The despot he! He would not let me weep!
There were the fountains of my tears as dry
As they had never flow'd! My heart did swell
To bursting; yet no sigh would he let forth
With vent to give it ease. There had I sat
And died—But Heaven a stronger tyrant sent—
Hunger—that wrench'd me from the other's grasp,
And dragg'd me hither!—This is not the lesson
I set myself to con!

Re-enter MAUDE.

Maude. 'Tis noon, and yet
No sign of Edwin! Dost thou mind thy task?
Look to't! and when the cakes are fit to turn,
Call, and I'll come!

Alf. I'll turn them, dame.

Maude. You will?
You'll break them!—Know I not your handy ways?
I would not suffer thee put finger to them!
Call, when 'tis time! You'll turn the cakes, forsooth!
As likely thou could'st make the cakes as turn them!
[*Goes out.*

Alf. So much for poverty! Adversity's
The nurse for Kings;—but then the palace gates
Are shut against her!—They would else have hearts
Of mercy oft'ner—gems not always dropp'd
In fortune's golden cup. What thought hath he
How hunger warpeth honesty, whose meal
Still waited on the hour? Can he perceive
How nakedness converts the kindly milk
Of nature into ice, to whom each change
Of season—yea, each shifting of the wind,

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Presents his fitting suit? Knows he the storm
That makes the valiant quail, who hears it only
Through the safe wall—its voice alone can pierce;
And there talks comfort to him with the tongue,
That bids, without, the shelterless despair?
Perhaps he marks the mountain wave, and smiles
So high it rolls!—while on its fellow hangs
The fainting seaman glaring down at death
In the deep trough below! I will extract
Riches from penury; from sufferings
Coin blessings; that if I assume again
The sceptre, I may be the more a king
By being more a man!

MAUDE *re-enters, goes towards the fire, lifts the cakes, goes to* ALFRED, *and holds them to him.*

Maude. Is this your care?
Ne'er did you dream that meal was made of corn,
Which is not grown until the earth be plough'd;
Which is not garner'd up until 'tis cut;
Which is not fit for use until 'tis ground;
Nor used then till kneaded into bread?
Ne'er knew you this? It seems you never did,
Else had you known the value of the bread;
Thought of the ploughman's toil; the reaper's sweat;
The miller's labour; and the housewife's thrift;
And not have left my barley cakes to burn
To very cinders!

Alf. I forgot, good dame.

Maude. Forgot, good dame, forsooth! You ne'er forgot
To eat my barley cakes! [*Knock.*] Open the door!

MAUDE *sets the cakes on the table, where she had been kneading them;* ALFRED *opens the door.*

Alf. An aged man!

Maude. Come in—[*enter an old* Man.] What want you?

Old Man. Food!

Maude. Want calls on want, when you look here for food!

Old Man. Good dame, to say I have not tasted food

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Since morning yesterday, is not to speak
My need more urgent than it is.
Maude. Whate'er
Thy need, we cannot minister to it—
Seek richer quarters.
Alf. Stay! He's in the gripe
Of straitest want. There's food, and give it him!
Maude. Ay, when we've scanty stock for three days more!
Alf. We breakfasted this morning; yesternight
We supped, and noon ere then had seen us dine.
Since yestermorn he has not touched a meal!
Whoe'er lacks food 'tis now his turn to eat.
This portion would be mine—I'll go without!
Here!—Here!—Good dame, the hand which gave us that
Will not more sparing of its bounty be
For using thus its gift! The hand that fed
So many thousands with what only seem'd
Provision for a few, could also make
The remnant answer us for many a meal!
Old Man. O strong in faith!—In mercy rich! Whoe'er
Thou art, that hand is with thee! Wast thou great,
And art thou now brought low? 'Twill make thy fall,
Thy rise—thy want, abundance—thy endurings,
Enjoyings—and thy desolation, troops
Of friends, and lovers countless! Does the storm
Hold on? Ne'er heed it! There's the sun behind,
That with effulgence double shall break through,
And make thee cloudless day! [*Goes out.*
Maude. A poor man's wish,
They say, is better than a rich man's gift.
If house and lands thou'st lost, I would not say
But thou may'st get them back again, with roof
Enlarged and acres grown. Yet lands and house
To come, are not so good as bread in hand,
And that thou'st given away.—If Edwin speeds
No better than he did yesterday!
Alf. Ne'er fear—
These arrows when I've trimm'd, and strung this bow,

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I'll find thee out a garner in these wilds
To dress the table still!
Maude. I'd rather trust
A peck of barley meal to furnish it!
Edwin [*without*]. What, hoa! within'
Maude. 'Tis Edwin's voice!
Edwin [*without*]. Within!
Open the door!
Maude. Thank Providence, his hands
Have something else to do! [*Opens the door.*
Edwin [*entering with a sack*]. Provision, wife!
A month's subsistence! Take it in, and ply
Thy housewifery; for friends must eat of it—
Guests sure of welcome who supply the board
They ask their hosts to spread. A gallant troop
Of countrymen, for common safety link'd,
And wand'ring through the land, with hopes, they say,
To learn some tidings of their king; and if
They find him, list themselves beneath his banner,
And face the Dane again. [MAUDE *goes out.*
Alf. [*Aside.*] The land's not lost
That's left a son to struggle for't. The king
Has yet his throne, that's firmly seated in
His people's hearts.
Edwin [*going to the door*]. In! in!

Enter EGBERT, KENRICK, ARTHUR, EDWY, OSWY, *and others, variously armed.*

Eg. Thanks, friend!
Edwin. No thanks.
You're guests the frugal'st host might entertain,
Who cater for yourselves. Sit down. The board
Shall soon be covered.
Eg. And we have a cup
To cheer it with, with richer beverage
Than what the fountain yields, replenish'd. Bring
A flagon, worthy host—
Ken. [*Aside to* ARTH.] Commend him to
A cover'd board and brimming cup! He's fit
To play the leader there;—but he's no head

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For men like us, that rise betimes from meat,
And wish for busy hands. I'm weary on't!
Arth. [*Aside to* KEN.] And so am I! and trust me, of our minds
Are many more.
Ken To lead a life of shifts
That we may dine in safety! I'll no more on't!
Give me a skirmish!
Arth. Tell him so.
Ken. I will,
Ere I touch food again. [*Returns with* ARTH.
Eg. [*to* ALF.] Is it a bow
You shape?
Alf. It is.
Eg. I pray you show it me.
Alf. [*Rising and coming forward.*] Here.
Eg. [*Struck with the appearance of* ALF.] Forgive me that I called you from your seat.
Alf. No wrong is done where none is meant.
Eg. You make
The wrong the greater, so excusing it.
Lodge you beneath this roof?
Alf. I do.
Eg. [*Aside.*] I've met
With men whose faces utter histories,
That seeing them I could tell their course of life—
Whether on ocean or on land—uneven
Or smooth—almost what perils they had run,
Or incidents of happy fortune seen.
Now his is one of them.
Alf. You'd see the bow?
Eg. [*mechanically taking, and almost at the same time returning it.*] Your pardon.
[ALF. *returns to his seat.*

Enter MAUDE, *with cakes, which she lays on the table, while one of* EGBERT'S *party enters with a flagon, and sets it down.*

Maude. This bread will serve till more is ready, friends. [*Goes out.*
Eg. Sit down.

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Ken. Sit down who will, I'll not sit down.
Arth. Nor I.
Osw. Nor I.
Eg. Why? what's amiss?
Ken. We loathe
To lead this wary life. The very deer
Confess the covert irksome, and at times
Betake them to the plain.
Eg. Not when they hear
The hunters are abroad! Sit down! Sit down!
Ken. We'll not sit down, till 'tis determined who
Shall head the table.
Eg. I shall head it.
Ken. Ay?
Edwy. And wherefore should he not?
Ken. Go to! Go to!
You question far too bold for one so young.
Edwy. I question in the right, and so am bold
Far less than thou, that question'st in the wrong.
Ken. The wrong? Thou'rt but a boy!
Edwy. The boy that proves
Himself a man, does all a man can do.
Ken. Beware thou dost not prove thyself on me,
My metal's temper'd—thine at best but raw.
Before thy chin exchanged its coat of down
For one of manlier fashion, I had shown
A beard in twenty fields.
Eg. No more of this!
The post by lot is mine. I got it not
Of mine own choice; nor yet by partial leave.
It fell to me. It might have fallen to you,
To him, or him—to any one—and then—
No matter! If, by fearing to be rash,
And overshoot the mark, my shaft hath lit
O'er-short on't, I am content a better bow
Should lead the game.
Edwy. It shall not be! We'll have
No other leader! Sides, Sirs, sides!
Ken. Come on!
When they've such stomach for't, 'twere strange if we
Lack'd appetite. Come on!

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Alf. [*Rushing in between them as they are on the point of encountering.*] Hold! Stop! Which side's
The Dane? I stand for England! Can it be?
You're Saxons all! What! Are your foes so few
You make ones of each other? Fie, Sirs! Fie!
Arth. [*to* KEN.] Who's he?
Ken. I know not.
Alf. [*to* KEN.] You're a soldier?
Ken. Yes.
Alf. Whose sword is that you draw?
Ken. My own.
Alf. Your country's!
You took it, with an oath to use it 'gainst
Her foes, and do you turn it on her sons?
For shame!
Arth. Why bear you his rebuke?
Alf. [*to* ARTH.] And you?
Arth. A soldier too.
Alf. [*to* OSW.] And you?
Osw. The same.
Alf. Beneath whose banner shot you arrow last?
Arth. and *Osw.* The king's.
Alf. And take you aim at the king's liege?
As well the king himself! What! do you stand
With grasped weapons still? Or do you look
For signal here?—Old soldier, why is this?
Is't thus you use your battle-temper'd sword?
Is that the rust of Danish blood upon 't?
These hacks—are they the thrusts of Danish blades?
Ne'er hath it met the foe that master'd it?
Ne'er hath it fail'd the friend that call'd upon it?
Still did it guard thy country while it could?
Yet would it back thy King, did he command?
And would'st thou tarnish it? [KEN. *hangs his head.*
The field, the field,
You drew it last in?—ha! You start at that!
Remember you who won that field? You do!
His shout is in thine ear again! Thine eye
Beholds him scattering carnage through the ranks
Of those that fled!—The Saxon then was down!—
What! tighten you your grasp, till with the strain

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Your weapon trembles? Keep it for the Dane,
And put it stainless up!

[KEN. *sheathes his sword*—ARTH. *and* OSW. *unbend their bows—The rest follow the example.*

Eg. [*Aside.*] What man is this,
That lacks all sign and title of command,
Yet all obey?

Edwy. We're friends again.

Ken. Content.

Eg. A cup, then, to our making up.—Sit down.—
A pledge for concord, friends—The king!

All. The king!

Eg. I pray you, Edwy, sing those rhymes for us,
You've strung so well, and we so love to hear.

Edwy. Right willingly; though homely be the verse,
I dare be sworn was ne'er more rich in heart.

[*Sings.*]

When circling round the festive board
The cup is fill'd the highest,
And one and all their love record
For him their thoughts the nighest—
Who owns the name their lips pronounce,
While vouching tear-drops spring, Sirs,
In eyes he does not see? At once
I'll tell you—Here's "The King," Sirs!

When proud in arms the nation stood,
To front the foul invader,
And England did what England could,
And fate alone betray'd her—
Who was the foremost to advance,
The first a spear to fling, Sirs,
The last to quit the field? At once
I'll tell you—Here's "The King," Sirs!

And, now, when o'er the prostrate land
The spoiler roams resistless,
And Vengeance fears to lift her brand,
And Hope almost is listless—
Whence does the beam of solace glance,
The song of heart'ning ring, Sirs,
And promise freedom yet? At once
I'll tell you—Here's "The King," Sirs!

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Eg. Well sung.
Edwy. What's well intended, scarce comes short,
Howe'er performance halts—I did my best.
Alf. My heart o'erflows!—I shall betray myself!
What could my palace boast to vie with this?
Not for its carved roof would I exchange
These rafters, 'neath whose shelter, vanquish'd, stripp'd
Of crown and sceptre, I am still a king—
My people's hearts my throne!
Eg. What trumpet's that?
Arth. [*Going to the door.*] I'll see.
Ken. I know.
Eg. Whose is it?
Ken. 'Tis the Dane's.
I know his flourish well. Let's out, and meet him!
Is't not the Dane? [*To* ARTH., *who returns.*
Arth. It is. They're close upon us!—
A quick retreat!—Their numbers double ours.
[*All start up except* ALF.
Alf. No more?
Arth. No more!—What can we, one to two?
[ALF. *rises, looks sternly at him for a moment, and goes out hastily, in an opposite direction.*
Eg. Why goes he?
Arth. For his safety to provide.
Let us provide for ours by instant flight.
Ken. He's not the man to fly! My life upon it,
He'll never turn his back upon the foe!—
I told you so!
[ALF. *returns armed with a sword and target.*
Alf. What distance off's the Dane?
Arth. Scarce half a mile by this.
Alf. [*To himself.*] The wood's to pass.
Unseen we can approach, and set upon them.
All unprepared for us. Divide your band!
[*They mechanically obey him, alternately looking at each other and at* ALFRED, *with an expression of wonder and inquiry.*
Half with your leader go; and half with me!
[EG. *mechanically heads one of the divisions.*
Ours be it to charge! They're sure to waver. Then

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Our shout your signal be to second us!
My bounding heart presages victory!
And so I see does yours, old soldier. Come,
There be our first trust; and our second here!
Say, would you back your king? Then follow him!
[ALFRED *and* EG. *go out, the rest enthusiastically following.*

SCENE III.—*The Country, interspersed with Wood.*

Enter ODDUNE, EDGAR, *Chiefs, and Soldiers.*—EDGAR *bearing the standard of the Rafen.*

Od. Halt, comrades! Here we'll take our noon's repast.
This velvet sward will be our pleasant couch,
To rest us from our toil. And lose not heart!
We'll find our Alfred yet! What, though our search
Has hitherto proved vain? When look'd for least
Perchance we'll light upon him. Fortune's smiles,
Like fortune's frowns, when once they come, come thick.
Our expedition fairly has begun,
Fairly proceeded, and will fairly end.

Edg. Know you these parts?

Od. Right well. You stand in Mercia;
Where, as that aged lonely man surmised,
A monarch's head beneath a peasant's roof
Contented shelters. [*Shout.*] Hark! the cry of onset!
From thence it comes! Guard you the spoil! The rest,
That choose it, follow me!
[ODDUNE *and Saxons go out*—EDGAR *and Saxons remain.*

Edg. Hie after them,
And bring me word what's passing. If the Dane,
[Soldier *goes out.*
My life upon't again he bites the dust! [*Shouts.*
Another shout! The contest's close at hand!
I hear the clashing of their weapons,—Well?
[Soldier *re-enters.*

Soldier. The Dane is overthrown! Our countrymen
Alone achieved the victory! He fled,

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Ere full we came in sight. Some man of note
Is added to our band, for soon as met
Our mighty chief embraced him!

Enter ODDUNE, ALFRED, EGBERT, *and Party, with* ODDUNE'S *following.*

Od. Countrymen,
Behold your king!
Alf. Rise! rise! my gallant friends.
We're brothers struggling in one common cause,
And by heaven's high appointment haply met!
Od. Haply indeed! Thus at your feet I lay
The standard of the Dane!
[*Takes the Danish standard from* EDG. *and lays it at* ALFRED'S *feet.*
Alf. What! more success!
My faithful Earl! what chance has brought thee hither?
Whence comest thou?
Od. From my castle, which the Danes
Beset, commanded by the brother chiefs
Hinguar and Hubba, by whose sister's skill
Was wrought that standard, call'd their fatal Rafen,
Whose ominous device, they idly feign'd,
Upon the eve of victory would flap
Its magic-woven wings. It seem'd, indeed,
As if death rode upon them, marking us
His prey; for famine plied us worse within,
Than e'en the foe without. But 'twas a friend
Severe to us for our good; despairing succour,
And all munition gone, at night we made
A sally, all resolved to cut our way
Through the enemy, or perish sword in hand!
The Dane was unprepared—before our march
Startled his ear, our swords were at his breast!
My liege, you may believe, the weapons which
Despair first drew were wielded now by hope;
Escape was certain; but would he escape
Whom danger woo'd with chance of victory?
We fought for it; and won it!
Alf. Fair exploit!
Od. Of fairer yet, the news of our success,

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My liege, gives hope. Such numbers throng'd to us
Upon our march, the handful, that I thought
To greet you with, has swell'd into a host—
Brave volunteers, whose pay's the leave to serve.
My liege, your queen and son?
Alf. Oddune, forbear!
The Dane has buried them—They sleep beneath
The ruins of thy master's castle, in
The flames of which they perish'd, Oddune! From
A dying follower I learn'd it! Learn'd,
That treason led the accursed assailants on!
If lips that speak for the last time speak truth,
Edric has proved a traitor! Queen and child,
Except my country, Oddune, I have none—
That, now, is Alfred's all!—His all, for which
Alone he cares to live! Now, could we learn
The state and numbers of the enemy,
A blow might soon be struck—Oddune!—
Od. My liege.
Alf. [*to himself.*] No—that were doubtful—Oddune:
Od. Well, my liege?
Alf. [*to himself.*] And so were that!
Od. My liege, you spoke just now.
Alf. Anon, my Oddune! Make the attempt myself?
Yes! Life and empire on this cast I'll stake!
But how provide myself? There is a place
In the glen where, of its shaggy vesture scant,
Its sides stand bare, and their huge ribs expose
Of solid rock; so giddy steep withal,
That down direct from the precipitous verge
You many fathoms look.—There have I mark'd
A lonely wight at the bottom couch'd, with harp
Playing to the idle echoes by the hour,
Admiring how they mock'd him—I will use
That harp!—will use it to expel the foe,
That thrust its master from the shining hall
To the dim cavern-cell; spill'd his heap'd dish—
O'erturn'd his cup, from all sides running o'er,
And cast him, with that golden song of his,
To roots and water,—Edwy, speak with me!

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Wilt be awhile companion to thy king,
Though to share danger with him?
Edwy. To share death.
Alf. Your hand! My friends, our country must be free!
My trusty Oddune, wonder not, although
You've found your king, to lose him for a time.
This list of trusty chiefs, with whom, through means
I need not name to thee, I have kept up
Intelligence, will show thee whom to warn
Of thy success. Summon them to repair
To Selwood forest, there to meet their king.
There shall we meet again, my gallant friends!
Your hands, my chiefs! Soldiers, our hearts embrace!
Farewell! Be strong in hope! The land's not lost
That's left a son resolved to do her right;
And here are troops of sons, and loyal ones!
Confirm the stirring spirit of the time
Till it o'erspread the realm; the which throughout
With swiftest expedition bear the call
That to her rescue rouses those that love her!
Strong in her children should a mother be!
Shall ours be helpless that has sons like us?
God save our native land, whoever pays
The ransom that redeems her!—though the king!
There king and subject side by side shall stand!
Stand by your king, your king will stand by you!

[ALF. *and* EDWY *go out.* OD. *and the others severally.*

END OF ACT II.

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ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The inside of Guthrum's Tent.*

Enter GUTHRUM *and* EDRIC.

Guth. I swear a royal booty! Thou hast done
Great service to the Dane. With these supplies
No need to forage. Here we'll sit at ease,
And rest us from the war.

Edr. No rest for me!
Far richer holds than those which I surprised
And plunder'd, at my master's feet shall lay
Their treasure and munition.

Guth. At thy friend's!
Call me not master! Call me father! Think
To thy first expedition what we owe!—
The capture of the royal Saxon's son,
The heir of Alfred.

Edr. Would his queen, as well,
Were now within thy power!—But she escaped,
Or perish'd in the flames.

Guth. Come, Edric!—speak;
What shall I give thee to reward the love,
That so hath labour'd to enrich me? Come,
Ask what thou wilt, by Odin it is thine.

Edr. Thou badest me call thee father. With the leave
Give me the right to hail thee by that title:
I ask thy daughter's hand.

Guth. I give it thee.
Seek her, and bring her hither.

Edr. For that boon
Command my blood! Ay, every drop of it.

[*Goes out.*

Enter HALDANE.

Hal. My Lord, a Saxon minstrel is without:
The string he touches with a master's hand;
And as he plays, a youth, that waits upon him,

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Sings to his harp rare tales of love and war
As ever ear did list to.
Guth. Bring him in.

[HALDANE *goes out, and returns with* ALFRED, *followed by* EDWY. GUTHRUM, *who had sat down, struck by the deportment of* ALFRED, *rises.*

Guth. Ha! who art thou? What art thou?
Alf. I'm the bard!
The son of fantasy!
Whose world's o' the air—to mortal vision else
Impalpable—a paragon to this—
Where he communes with forms, whose radiancy
Outshines the lustre of earth's fairest things;
Whose title, from above, earth can't confer
Or take away! Whose smile is coveted
By beauty—valour—their bright mirror, where
They see themselves more bright! Whose tributaries
Are kings themselves! Their gorgeous state but serves
To swell his strain, that doth emblazon them
Beyond their deeds or titles.
Guth. Well replied;
I like thy answer better that 'tis bold.
Sit down, sit down.—A sample of your skill.—
Thou spokest of beauty now,—what canst thou say
In praise of it?
Alf. [*to himself.*] Thanks to the tender hand
That guided me to con the minstrel's lore,
And treasure't in my heart!
Guth. Let's taste thy skill.

ALFRED.

Would'st thou know what beauty is?
Beauty is the queen of sighs!
Not a heart but owneth this,
Proud or humble, light or wise.
Crowned goblets some desire;
Some to see the banquet spread:
Some prize shining gold; and higher
Value some the shining deed;
Safety's deem'd a gem by some;
Danger some a jewel call;

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Some to power desire to come;
But beauty is the prized of all!
Well the Bard her praise may sing—
Of his soul-entrancing lyre,
She commands the master-string,
That which lends it all its fire!
Wanting which he could not sing—
Rhymeless, numberless, might be,
Nor e'er had won a name for deathless minstrelsy.

Guth. Right well thou provest thy title to thy name.
What does the youth that waits upon thee?
Alf. Sing,
The while I play.
Guth. We'll hear him at the banquet.
Thou art not old—and yet thou look'st not young;
Thy brow with wisdom graver than with years—
I'd talk with you; for great, unless I err,
Your skill in lore, we little care to search
Whose school's the battle-field. Attend me! Come.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A sequestered rural spot near the Camp.*

Enter INA (*leading* ETHELRED), EDITH, *and Boy.*

Edith. Your little charge is a fair healthful plant,
Whose thriving looks bespeak your careful tending.
How strong is infancy in its helplessness!
Of all that dwelt within the hold where he
Was found, no soul, they say, was spared but him,
Howe'er they pray'd for mercy!
Ina. Little praise
To him that saved him! Edric's treacherous heart
Can own no touch of mercy! Know you not
The boy is Alfred's son? His hold it was,
Which Edric with my father's host beset,
When found the chief this boy. Go on before,
We'll follow you; and mind you spare no pains
To humour him. [*To Boy, who goes out with* ETH.
I should not love thee, boy:
Thy race is Ina's bane!

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Edith. Why say'st thou so?
The Saxon loves thee, Ina.
Ina. Loves me?
Edith. Yes!
What, though his passion is not on his tongue;
His heart is full of it. It speaks in sighs—
Love's proper words. Ne'er plainer spoke to ear.
Ina. Nay, tell me not. His heart is stone to me!
He sighs! but 'tis for freedom!
Edith. 'Tis for you!
How love is blind to what it pines to see!
You think him stone; belike so thinks he you.
Look at thyself, at once thou see'st him!
Your eyes at parting, that strain after him,
At meeting, feast on any other thing;
Your tongue that, when he hears not, rings with him,
In his hearing's noteless, as it ne'er knew sound.
For too strong love, his love's accounted none.
Ina. I tell thee, no! His thoughts abide not here.
They're with his countrymen, some daughter fair
Of whom he loves—not Ina. Be it so.
The cheek I love shall smile, though not on me;
The bird I'd keep with me I will let go,
'Plaining the bondage that would kill with doating.
He's free—my father gives him liberty.
Edith. And what for thee?
Ina. To die, like a poor flower
That lives with only gazing on the sun;
But from her radiant lord too long shut out
By the cold cloud, in silence hangs her head,
And dies a smiling death!
Edith. He comes.
Ina. Alas!
For the last time.

OSWITH *enters, perceiving* INA.

Os. Still, still my treacherous steps
Betray me, leading me to what I'd shun;
Yet what is ever present to my thought
Why fears my eye to see? My thraldom's full—
If 'tis enchantment, better to enjoy

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The fatal sweetness of the powerful spell
I strive in vain to break!
Ina. Saxon, thou'rt free.
Os. Recal thy words!
Ina. I speak my father's will.
Os. Why does he give me liberty
Ina. Because
His Ina begg'd the boon.
Os. Why did she so?
Would she had begg'd my death! I did not ask
For freedom;—thraldom was more kind to me,
Which chain'd me unto that I ought to fly,
But fain would cling to. Honour did not swerve
That was constrain'd to look upon its bane;
And if it look'd till it forgot itself,
'Twas its mischance—not crime.—Now, if it falls,
It falls of its own will! O maid, too fair!
Help me to 'scape the ruin thou hast wrought!
Think—think—'tis an apostate kneels to thee!
Instruct thy melting eye to flash with scorn—
Teach thy sweet tongue harsh indignation's note—
Erect thy form with dread severity—
Till, like a seraph, sterner in thy frown
For what thou look'st and breathest of beauteous heaven,
Thou awest me into virtue.
Ina. Wouldest thou be free,
Thou art so.
Os. Am I? Lady, there are bonds,
The wearing which endears them to the slave,
So that he hugs them—would not be set free!
Free me from these!
Ina. What bonds?
Os. E'en such, as not
Our limbs imprison, but the things that rule them—
Our thoughts and wills—as coil about our hearts,
And keep their hold, when links of steel were wax.
Ina. Methinks I have a guess what bonds you mean:
Are they not heavy ones when worn alone,
But light when others share them? Is it so?
Hadst thou such partnership, would'st thou be free?
I would not, so had I!

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Os. It cannot be!
Half she reveals her heart, and veils her eyes.
Do her veil'd eyes unveil the other half?
Am I so bless'd, so cursed, as to be loved?
Nay, then, 'tis fate I'd cope with, and must yield!
Oh, to have fallen in battle!—to have fallen
When honour was my mistress!—to have fallen
When in her radiant eye I drew my sword,
And deem'd my life a stake not worth a thought
To venture for her smile! When wooing her,
I strode more blithely through the battle-field,
Than e'er I bounded down the festive hall!
Ina. What makes thee wish for death?
Os. The dread to lose
What was my more than life; but now seems poor—
Like to be cast away, since I have found
A good I covet more than life and it!
Ina. What dost thou covet so?
Os. Thee, lady, thee!
Thou art that good of value paramount!
Oh, to have met thee with a heart at large!
No solemn debt—no knotted tie upon it!
Free to be all thy own—to render thee
Its whole of love, hope, honour, loyalty—
One large, unbroken, everlasting gift—
The hand which now, in doubtful joy, I take—
How had I caught, in tranced ecstacy,
And kneeling, laid the offering at thy feet!

Enter EDRIC.

Edr. Let go that hand! 'Tis mine!
Os. What fire is this,
That with the light'ning's speed darts through me, and feels
As all consuming!—Thine!
Ina. Believe him not.
Oswith, believe him not—believe the maid
With thought of thee, that all forgets herself—
Casts off the bashful 'tire of virginhood,
And, unenforced, stands confess'd thine own!
The eyes turns on thee she would still avert,
And lets thee see them, though they stream with love—

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Calls on thee with the tongue that ne'er till now
Betray'd her secret, to receive't for thine!
Believe him not, he sports with thee—thy heart
Is not more surely seated in thy breast,
Than is thy image lodged within my heart—
Not more the spring of life to thee, than that
Is life itself to Ina! 'Fore the world
Do I proclaim me thine, and cleave to thee!
But plight me faith for faith.

Os. I do, sweet maid!

Edr. [*drawing his sword.*] My right's a bar, which thou must first remove!

Os. 'Twixt me and life! Strong love hath made me weak
As a poor straw upon a torrent's breast,
And bears as swift away! Thy right! What right?
[*Half drawing his sword.*

Ina. Give me thy hand! Give me thy hand, I say!
Take it from thy sword! Thou'rt mine! Thy hand—thy arm—
Thy all! Have I not given my all for thee?
Paid down for thee a virgin's heart, that ne'er
Before in love was barter'd. Give me thy hand!
Or thou'rt the falsest, most forsworn of men,
Breaking the vow that scarce hath left thy lips,
And I'm the poorest, most abused of maids!
Give me thy hand! Nay, an thou wilt not, thus
Upon thy arm I'll hang, and be thy shield,
Taking the blows upon my fearless breast,
That threaten wound to thine.

Os. [*taking his hand from his sword.*] Thy right? What right?

Edr. Dost wish to learn? Such as the bridegroom claims—
As makes the lover bless his stars, and gives
Fulfilment of his long-enduring hopes—
As turns his blissful dreams to substances,
So rich, past credence, still he thinks he dreams—
Asks if he wakes—believes it—doubts it—sickens
Lest day prove night, and laughing morning come,
And in his very arms his treasures fade!

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Os. [*half drawing his sword.*] A bridegroom's right!
Ina. That right is thine alone!
O how thy frame with fearful passion shakes!
While thy full orbs strain on thy countryman,
With deadly purpose fixed! Turn them on me!
Read who is Ina's bridegroom in her face!
See whom her eyes with fondness strain upon,
As thine on him with hate! O what a fee
Thou makest me pay for that which costs thee nought!
I call thee lord—If that contents thee not,
Why then the dearer name of husband take,
And give me in exchange, an only look!
Os. [*to* EDR.] Explain thy words.
Edr. The service I have done
The Dane, he bids me name requital for;
And by his God he binds himself, whate'er
The boon, to grant it. Ina was the boon!
[OSWITH *draws his sword.*
Ina. List to me, Oswith—Oswith—by thy love!—
My father's oath has made me his! Hear mine!
By Odin, I'll be bride to none but thee!
Edr. Force will exact what frowardness denies!
Os. And thou could'st wed the bride that loathed [thee?
Edr. Yes.
Os. Put up thy sword. I'd whisper thee.
[*They whisper.*
Ina. Say it out.
Thy breath is mine! More than her own it feeds
Thy Ina's life! O, 'tis a treacherous breath,
To play the traitor to its mistress thus!
Speak out, I say! Thou heed'st me not! False friend!
Friend cruel and unfair, that gives me nought,
Whilst I give all to him!
Edr. 'Tis well. [*Goes out.*
Ina. 'Tis ill!
Not half so plain thy gleaming brandish'd sword
Could threaten death, as does thy flashing eye!
Os. Ina, thy fears are causeless. Prithee hence,
Back to the camp; whilst I revolve the means
Shall bring the course of our now thwarted loves
To prosperous issue.

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Ina. I'll revolve them with thee;
And thou shalt find how thrifty woman's wit,
When set to work by love.
Os. My Ina!—Love!
Bride!—Wife!—for wedded they whom love has wed—
I'd be alone.
Ina. I will not leave thee! Come!
We'll go to the camp together.
Os. Sweet! my way
Lies this way.
Ina. So does mine, then.
Os. Nay, farewell!
Ina. You leave me not! I'll cling to thee till death
Disjoins us! Drag me if thou wilt, I'll ne'er
Let go my hold! Oh was there ever maid
So lost for love! that knelt—that bent the knee—
Pleaded her cause with her bold tongue—paid tribute,
Large as her eyes could furnish, of her tears
To an unheeding lover, deaf to her,
And scarce confess'd an hour!

Re-enter EDRIC.

Edr. Was it for this
Thou sent'st me hence? to give thee pause for dalliance!
Traitor!
Os. Ha!
Edr. Coward! [*Both draw.*

Enter GUTHRUM *and* ALFRED.

Guth. Hold! forbear! Who stirs,
There's but a single step 'twixt him and death,
And he has trod it. What's your cause of quarrel?
Ina, my child! what share hast thou in't? What!
Dost turn from me? [*Angrily.*
Ina. My father!
Guth. There! there! there! [*Pressing her to him.*
Did I speak roughly to thee? Silly fawn,
To start at but a sound! Art thou in tears?
It does concern thee, then? How, Ina, speak!
Dost hear me? Answer, girl! Well; never heed.
You would if you could! No matter! Noble Edric,
Declare thy cause of quarrel to thy friend.

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Ina. Thou'rt not his friend! Call not thyself his friend!

Guth. My Ina, but I must! and so must thou—

Ina. Never!

Guth. What's that! My child, beware! You know
I brook not thwarting! must not be gainsaid!
Call him thy friend! Come! Show me thou'rt my child!
My flesh! my blood! that owe themselves to me,
And should be subject to me! Wilt not speak?
Take counsel! Something's rising in my heart
That bodes not good to thee! Once more I say,
Resist me not! Submit! Call him thy friend.
Art silent still? Now, minstrel, prove thou'rt wise!
I found thee so when we discoursed of peace!
Of war!—the duties subjects owe to kings,
And kings to subjects. Now propound the means
Behoves a father take, who would untie
A wilful daughter's tongue!

Alf. Force but subdues
The weak; still, with the strong, 'tis met by force.
Was never found the noble nature yet
That crouch'd before a frown! 'Tis sway'd with smiles.
Chiding her nature thou but chidest thy own!
She's thy soul's bright and fair reflecting glass!
But look at her! Sits not thy upper lip,
All manly as it is, and bold, to hers,
More proudly firm upon thy nether one,
Than hers upon its fellow! Vauntest thou,
As only late thou didst, rebuke with thee,
Given as rebuke, ne'er mended failing yet?
Then is thy boast her pardon! Give me favour
For speaking thus my thought.

Guth. Thou dost my wish.
I like thy frankness! Yes; I see! You're right!
She's all her father's child! Come to me, Ina!
[*She rushes into his arms.*
What would'st thou do for me?

Ina. Aught that I could.

Guth. Ah, there my Ina speaks! I like thee thus!
Thus Ina, when thou hang'st upon my neck,

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And gazest in my face! My Ina, list;
I'll tell thee wherefore I'd entreat thee call
The Saxon friend. I've sworn to give thee to him.
Ina. Without my heart? What, father, give my hand
Without my heart? Not so would'st thou give thine,
And make a league of friendship with thy hand
Thy heart protested 'gainst! And what were that,
Compared to one of love? A league of friendship,
That barr'd a friend out, and enclosed a foe!
Would'st thou do that? Thou would'st not give a smile
Without thy soul's consent. And would'st thou have
Thy Ina give her hand without her heart?
Guth. Dread Odin has my oath!
Ina. So has he mine!
Guth. What hast thou sworn?
Ina. Eternal truth to love!
Guth. Thou dost not know the passion? But thou dost!
'Tis clear! I see too sure thou art love's thrall!
Upon thy cheek his crimson pennon waves!
Thy down-cast eyes pay homage to his sway!
Thy heaving breast by its commotion shows
The conqueror is within! I see his power
Confess'd in every fibre of thy frame!
Whom dost thou love? Who has lit up this flame?
Ina. [*Kneeling.*] Thou, father, thou; whose fondness for thy child
Would sketch for her the man thou'dst have her wed.
How he should be among his peers in rank—
And that the first—without a peer in worth.
Most brave—most true—most generous—most good.
Fit to be challenger of all the field,
In all achievements of supreme renown,
And bear the palm from all! Nor yet to lack
Those qualities of visage, and of form,
Which to these other richer graces join'd,
Make the consummate man! But that I saw
My father such a man, I should have deem'd
A phantom 'twas he drew for me; for ne'er,

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Except in him, saw I embodied wealth
Of so rare worth—until I saw it there!
Guth. What's this to me?
Ina. The being of thy child—
Thy Ina—thy dear Ina—who forgets
Her father 'tis she's kneeling to, as though
He were a stranger to her; but now leaps
Into his bosom! Oh I'd like to see
The harm could reach me here!
Guth. The Saxon dies!
Ina. No! no!
Guth. He spurn'd the proffer of his life,
When forfeit to the God!
Ina. Nay hear me!
Guth. Spurn'd
My friendship! Guthrum's friendship!
Ina. No!
Guth. He did!
I loved him, though my foe, because I mark'd
His prowess in the fight! I could have thought
The God himself had turn'd against his sons,
And, angry, sided with their enemies!
He was my captive! He had bled to Odin!
I proffer'd him my friendship, would he make
Alliance with the Dane, to snatch him from
The altar; and he spurn'd me! Ay! refused
The hand of a victorious king, through faith
To an uncrowned fugitive! He did!
I spared him at my child's beseeching! He
That spurn'd the parent now would win the child!
He dies!
Alf. [*Aside to* GUTH.] Thy Ina dies! See, how she hangs,
Half dead, already on thy shoulder! Much
Thou lovest her! If none other calls thee father,
Beware thou art not childless!
Guth. Am I in the wrong?
Demand I more than is a father's due?
What is her life, but portion of my breath?
Alf. A portion thou would'st give thy breath to save?
Guth. Thou sayest right.

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Alf. A portion, too, which she
Would render up, not only to save thine,
But let thee breathe with ease.
Guth. Thou sayest right;
Yet bows she not her fancy to my will.
Alf. She cannot.
Guth. How?
Alf. You ask; and you have loved!
Guth. How know you that?
Alf. Who has not felt the flame?
Your passion was repaid.
Guth. How know you that?
Alf. How know I that? From nought but mutual love
A flower, consummate rich like that, could grow!
Where fairest things that harmonise unite!
E'en such a skin should such a mould ensheath,
To such a heart, be casket such a mould;
Such lineaments compose the beauteous face,
Of such a neck that makes its graceful seat!
And skin, and mould, and heart, and face be served
By such a minstrel as that tuneful tongue.
This speaks the mingling of accordant hearts,
Throbbing in fervent unity; that one
No thought, no wish, no hope, no joy can lodge,
But finds its fellow at the other's core!
Guth. Minstrel, thou'rt right! Deep does thy wisdom search;
Her mother, Eva, was my only love,
As I was hers! Though daughter of my foe,
She left her father, friends, land, faith, and all,
To follow me. She did!—She did!
Alf. And that's
Her child, in whom the passion that bless'd thee,
Thou'dst turn into a curse.
Guth. I like not that!
Thou makest too bold to say I'd curse my child!
Alf. Look at her!
Guth. Thou art right! Say on! Say on!
Yet where's the profit? Win me Odin's ear,
And move the God to give me back my oath!

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Thou but perplexest me! Since thou'rt so wise,
Show me the way not to forswear myself;
And yet not keep my oath.
Alf. Two oaths the God
Has registered; one only can be kept.
Which he accepts, the God himself decide.
You say he rules the sword; then to the sword
Entrust the cause, and these the terms of strife.
Who masters first his adversary's sword
And yet not sheds his blood, be his the maid.
Os. Content!
Edr. Content!
Ina. Oswith, this chain's of gold,
[*Still leaning on her father.*
That never knew alloy—cunningly wrought—
An amulet, that ever faithful guards
The wearer's wishes; proves it false to thine,
Drop it into the grave where I shall lie,
Ere by its treachery thy rival thrives.
Guth. And Edric, thou receive this ring from me.
The hand that wears it, holds its weapon true,
If faithful to the Dane, as thou to me.
Alf. I have a ring, a charmed bauble too.
Power to the hand it graces, does it give
O'er falsehood to prevail. 'Tis his who'll take it—
But who would wear it, and its virtue prove,
Must first affirm he owns a loyal heart—
True to the king that first his homage claim'd,
The land that gave him birth—Wilt take it, thou?
Edr. The ring I'll trust is this I now put on,
The guard of my good sword!
Alf. Wilt take it thou?
Os. Though to the King I'm true
That first my homage claim'd—true to the land
That gave me birth; yet more, than true to these,
The thrall of love, I dare not take the ring.
Alf. Show me thy hand—my countryman—'tis on!
'Tis a true hand—for ne'er would fit the ring
Disloyal finger yet. Look at it well!
Lo! speak I not the truth?
Os. [*Recognizing* ALF.] My liege!

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Alf. Beware!
In whose but a true subject's hands would place
A king his life. Be of good heart! No doubt
Palsy thy arm! The wishes of thy love,
Thy king, are with thee! Heaven be with thee too!
Guth. Away! I'll follow you! and see myself,
This bloodless trial made. [OSWITH *and* EDRIC *go out.*
Here minstrel, take
My child! Support her! Cheer her to abide
The issue of their strife. [*Goes out.*
Alf. [*Supporting* INA.] Fair maiden, take
The minstrel's word, thy lover wins the game!
Thy fears are wrongs, where wrong thou least would'st
do!
Doubt on thy champion did another cast,
How would disdain arouse thy languid lip;
Colour thy frozen cheek from snow to flame;
And the expired lustre of thine eye
Re-kindle with its lightning! Maiden, list!
The hand's best sinew ever is the heart!
Thy lover's is the sound one! Think of that!
That's right! Look up! Take courage! Oswith throws
His brand away, and grapples Edric's! Ha!
Keep thy hold, Edric, if thou canst! A child's—
An infant's—is it to thy rival's grasp!
Look on thy lover, maiden! His chief's eye
Upon him, double is a vassal's strength;
What then the lover's, in his mistress' eye,
That strives for victory, and she the prize?
He sees thee! Mark you, how his frame distends,
As though with superhuman vigour fraught,
At his good angel's sight? Wave, maiden fair,
Wave your white arm to him! 'Twere ten times worth
A royal pennon in a monarch's hand,
Cheering the champion of his challenged crown!
You see! You see! Now puts he forth his might!
Edric gives way! He faints! His limbs are wax,
Wrestling with limbs of steel! He falls! His sword
Waves o'er his head, in noble Oswith's hand.
Hold up! Nay, gasp not! It were wrong to die,
Slain by thy gallant lover's victory!

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Enter GUTHRUM, *leading* OSWITH.

Guth. There, Saxon, take my child; but thou'rt my thrall.
Thou must not bear her hence.

Alf. He should not! Guthrum!
Where'er I speak of thee I'll give thee out
Indeed a royal chief! Farewell!

Guth. Not yet.
By Odin thou shalt join our feast! I say
Thou shalt not go! I like thy company!
I'd hear thy harp again! Come! Follow all.

[*They go out.*

Re-enter EDRIC.

Edr. Foil'd, but not yet o'ercome. The baffled foe
That will not turn a friend, is like to prove
A deadly one! Oswith has won the maid,
But not possess'd her yet! I'll mar his love!
That minstrel is not what he seems! Me he shuns—
Communes with Oswith freely—Oswith knows him!
Some one of note—a prize to Guthrum—which
If Oswith lets escape, he wrongs the Dane;
And thence I'll work his ruin! To the banquet!
I'll watch their every movement; and unmask him,
Though I should tear the visor from his face.

[*Goes out.*

END OF ACT III.

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ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The inside of Guthrum's Tent.*

GUTHRUM, OSWITH, INA, *Chiefs*, ALFRED, EDWY, *&c. &c.*

Enter EDRIC.

Guth. Come Edric, though not Fortune's friend, thou'rt mine.
Why didst thou stay behind? Sit by me, Edric.
Look to the minstrel—see that his goblet's full—
Let it o'erflow—see to't!
Os. You feast not, love.
Ina. No more do you.
Os. I do not care to feast.
When the heart banquets, viands are pass'd by!
Edith. [*Entering.*] Your little Saxon favourite wants you, Ina;
He clamours for you, nought can quiet him.
Ina. Nay, try and soothe him. If he baffles thee,
Why bring him hither, then! [EDITH *goes out.*
Guth. Come, strike your harp!
We'd hear a strain; and prithee let it be
A warlike one. The triumph of the Dane—
Canst thou play that?
Alf. Accursed be the bard
That sings his country's shame! Her glory, chief,
I'll sing! My harp hath often rung with it!
Shall ring again! Or if the theme be done,
The strings, which many a year my hands have kiss'd,
I'll tear from their loved frame, though as they snap
My heart-strings break, and I partake the ruin.
Guth. By Odin, but thou'rt bold. I like thee for't.
Play what thou wilt. Well! what's to be the strain?
Alf. The downfall of Cadwallon.
Guth. What was he?
Alf. The Saxons' foe.

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ALFRED *plays while* EDWY *sings.*

Cry, cry to the eagle, her feast is prepared;
Cadwallon the Lion his falchion has bared!
Ten thousand spears dance to his trumpet's song,
As his march in thunder rolls along!
Does she hear? Will she come? Is she hurrying down?
All's ready, and waiting for her alone!
But the might's with the right,
From the cloud breaks the light;
And the head high at morning—may lie low ere the night!

But why does the Saxon, Oswald, kneel?
Is't for his prayers he's dressed in steel?
And wherefore kneel his Saxon bands?
Do they pray with their weapons in their hands?
Or are they contented to banquet the guest
Cadwallon the Lion has called to his feast?
But the might's with the right,
From the cloud breaks the light;
And the head high at morning—may lie low ere the night!

Not long did the Saxon kneel—he arose
With a shout that made leap the bold hearts of his foes;
And on he rush'd, and down he bore
The spears that hunted him before.
And the trumpet that sounded the first for the field—
Cadwallon the Lion's—was the first that was still'd!
For the might's with the right,
From the cloud breaks the light;
And the head high at morning—may lie low ere the night!

But where is the eagle was call'd to the feast?
She is come! but Cadwallon salutes not his guest,
She has fall'n to her meal without beckon or word;
She screams with her glee, but her mirth is unheard;
She has perch'd on the head of the warrior's son,
And the blood-drop that falls from her beak is his own.
For the might's with the right,
From the cloud breaks the light;
And the head high at morning—may lie low ere the night!

Guth. Well done! a strain that for a warrior's ear!
For me, thrice precious is the ruby drop

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Since the enchanting strain has breathed upon it!
Taste, friends; come, lips to brims; there's magic in
The cup! The health of him that pours it in—
"The bard," the king of song, whose praise to sound
Becomes and not disparages the lips
Of kings themselves!
Alf. [*Aside.*] A regal nature his!
There's something in thee, Guthrum, I could claim
Close kindred with; but there's no grasping hands
For thee and me, save in the deadly strife
That ends the hope of one of us! I've gain'd
All needful knowledge. Ward of caution none
They keep—in our complete discomfiture
Secure. An easy prey they're sure to fall
To sudden onset from a band like ours,
Strong in their cause, and resolute of heart.

Enter ELSWITH, *pale, emaciated, and in wretched attire.*

Guth. Ha! who art thou?
Els. Who play'd that strain?
Guth. Thou ask'st
As if reply were not a boon, but debt!
Whence gottest thou that air of high command?
Els. From misery!
Guth. She strangely teaches thee;
Making thee stately that makes others bow!
What seek'st thou here?
Els. I heard a strain without;
I'd learn who play'd that strain.
Guth. That harper.
Els. He!
Hope, thou didst right to mock me. I have found thee
Still a dissembler, and I'd trust thee still!
But now farewell, thou thing of specious tongue,
But hollow heart! Smooth face, that's but a mask
To cover what we loathe. Great promiser,
Little performer! Coiner of false smiles,
That turn out tears at last. I've done with thee!
[*She sits in the centre.*
Otho. Thou sitt'st in Guthrum's presence.
Els. What of that?

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I have sat down with Despair—a greater chief
Than Guthrum—one could make him gnash his teeth!
Ay, could he, mighty as your master is!
I've sat down with Despair! Now show me Death!
I'll take my seat by him! I fear him not!
Alf. Contain thyself, my heart!—It is my queen!
Guth. Her mind's distracted!
Alf. No!—It is her heart.
Ina. Perhaps she hungers. Give her food!
[*They present food to her.*
Els. Too rich!
Famine partakes not such! She feeds on haws,
Acorns, and roots, and berries! Give me these!
For these we thank the Dane!
Guth. You thank the Dane!
Ha!
Alf. 'Tis a woman in affliction speaks!
Guth. And let her speak! Yet does she mar the cheer.
Remove her!
Els. Touch me not! Stand off! My name
Is Woe! I am the mark of Wrath! Behold
How he has smitten me, and smitten me
That mine own eyes don't know me! One hot day,
Parch'd up with thirst and hunger, of a brook
I stoop'd to drink, and saw myself, and scream'd
At presence of a stranger. Time makes things
Unlike the things they were; but Wrath's the changer!
Guth. Persuade her to go hence.
Els. I hear you! Ill
You entertain the guests you force to greet you!
Guth. We force!
Els. Ay! burn them out of house and home!
Murder their husbands, and their children! Scatter
Their friends, that where a thousand troop to-day
Not one is found to-morrow!—Bid them search
For viands in the larders of the wolf
And vulture! which, deriding them, perforce
They come to you.
Guth. Hence with her! force her hence!
Alf. [*starting up*]. Who hand of force lays on her,
let him die!

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And save thy manly name from the reproach,
That in thy presence, misery like this
Was offer'd insult with impunity,
And in the sacred person of a woman!
Els. The voice too!—No! it is not, cannot be!
Guth. Heard'st what she said?
Alf. I did.
Guth. Was't true?
Alf. Free speech
Accord'st thou me?
Guth. 'Tis thine.
Alf. The truth she speaks.
But one she seems 'mongst thousands, whom thy sword,
Ravenous of conquest, hath made widows of,
And childless mothers! Who, this hour thou feast'st,
Are famishing!—in their own land, without
Abode or food—and curse the hour when first
Thou trodd'st upon their shores!
Guth. In their own land?
[*He quits his seat and approaches* ALF.
Surely I heard thee not! In their own land?
'Tis mine! all mine! their land! air! water! They
Themselves! All mine! Mine! Mine! They! Thou! Ay, thou!
That mock'st me! bravest me! thou, I say, art mine!
My thrall! my slave! a worm! thing for my foot
To tread upon! Confess it!
Alf. No!
Guth. Thou wilt not!
Know'st thou the man thou tempt'st? Dost hear me? Think'st thou
I speak to thee by my page, to whom thou'rt free
To lend but half an ear? May'st pass excused
To bear no duty in thine air, thine eye?
May'st answer by a nod, or not at all? I'm Guthrum!
He whose breath's thy life! A look—
An only look of whose incensed wrath
Might strike thee dead! Dost thou not tremble?
Alf. No!
Guth. Up, slave, and beg thy life!

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Alf. Why beg for that
I deem not worth the only asking for;
Moreover, that thou hast not power to take?
Guth. Not power to take? Was never Guthrum braved
By mortal man before! Not power to take!
Guthrum is but a child! Strong as my wrath,
My stronger wonder overpowers it quite,
And from a tempest quells me to a calm!
The reason? Come! I'll let thee have thy way,
Givest thou me but the reason. Come! the reason?
Be it but half sufficient, it shall weigh
Acquittance of thee. Come! the reason—come!
Alf. Your royal word is warrant for my safety.
What by your leave I speak, yourself forbids you
To turn to evil 'gainst me.
Guth. Right, by Odin!
You're always right! and you may speak again,
And freely as before. [*Resumes his seat.*
Ina. I prithee, Oswith,
Persuade thy countryman to leave the tent.
What now is safety may anon prove danger,
Fierce as 'tis sudden is my father's wrath;
And ever in the hour of social cheer
Most to be fear'd, and look'd for—speak to him!
Conjure him to go hence. [Os. *approaches* ALF.
Os. Had he a steed——
Ina. A steed?—An easy thing, my Oswith! Two—
The fleetest in the camp—shall be at hand,
Ready caparison'd—behind the tent—
That way conduct him hence.
[*Whispers an Attendant out while* OSWITH *approaches* ALFRED.
Os. My liege, your ear.
Edr. [*to* GUTH.] You mark, my lord, he whispers him.
Guth. I do; and what of that?
Edr. They understand each other.
Guth. Think'st thou so?
Edr. Yes; I'll have an eye upon them.
Guth. I heed them not.

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Enter EDITH *with* ETHELRED.

Els. Whose child is that? not thine!
Edith. He is not mine.
Els. He's not a Danish child.
Edith. He's not.
Els. Is he a Saxon then? Is he a Saxon then?
Edith. He is a Saxon child.
Els. A Saxon! Pray you, let me see his face!
He's mine!
Edith. He shrinks from thee. He knows thee not.
Els. Me can he know, that do not know myself?
He'll know my voice! My child! My Ethelred!
He knows it not! and is my voice changed too?
Or does my face false witness bear so strong,
He gives not credence to his mother's voice!
He is my child! Believe it for my tears,
My choking utterance, my bended knees,
And my imploring arms that sue to you,
And ask you for my child!
Alf. [*Aside.*] Does providence
Vouchsafe such mercy!
Guth. If the child is thine,
Thou'lt know where it was found.
Els. Too well I know!
Both when and where! A castle did ye sack,
Whose tenant was the mother of that child.
At night the cry arose, "*The Dane!*" "*The Dane!*"
And then the bursting gate—the clash of arms!
The shout—the yell—the shriek—the groan—which rage
And cruelty, and fear, and pain supply,
To make the concert fell of savage war!
That mother's care too safe had lodged her child
In the remotest chamber of the whole.
She ask'd for it; "*The Dane!*" was the reply.
She would have sought it; but they held her back,
And cried, "*The Dane!*" She shriek'd to be set free;
Now threaten'd! now implored! but all in vain!
"*The Dane!*" was all the answer she could get!
They forced her thence in cruel duty! Ay!
In duty forced the mother from her child;
While lent the Dane a torch to light her path,

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Her flaming towers that blazed about her boy!
And she went mad! yet still they bore her on;
Nor other heed to her distraction gave,
Except to cry, "*The Dane!*" "*The Dane!*" "*The Dane!*"

[*Sinks exhausted upon a seat, clasping her forehead.* GUTH. *and* EDR. *whisper.*

Els. Alas! they give not credence to my words!
Will no one plead for me? My countryman,
Essay your art! Hast not some melting strain—
Such as draw tears whether they will or not?
As moves. [*Recognizing* ALF.] I've found him!

Edr. [*Coming forward.*] Whom? Whom hast thou found?

Els. [*Recollecting herself.*] My boy!

Edr. [*Aside.*] I thought she meant the minstrel.

Alf. Yes!

She knows me, and I am a husband still!
I am a father and a husband still!
Oh, happiness, thou comest out of time!
Thou choosest ill the place to greet me in!
Thou mockest me to hold thine arms to me!
I dare not rush to their embrace! I'm poor,
With all the wealth thou say'st is mine again!
I dare not touch it! Better were it far,
I had not now been told on't.

Guth. Take the boy!
But first true answer to our question give.
The castle where we found him was the king's!
Clad as no vassal's offspring was the child.
If thou his mother art, thou art the queen!
Art thou so?

Alf. Guthrum, to the test I put
Thy nature! If 'tis worthy of thy state,
Thy prosperous fortune, and thy high renown,
Approve it now. Lo, Guthrum, do I play
The traitor for thy honour! In thy power
Thou hold'st the son and consort of thy foe!
Of Alfred! Use thy fortune as beseems thee!
Swear by thy God, they shall receive from thee
Safeguard of life and honour.

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Guth. Ay, by Odin.
Els. Would'st thou not take a ransom for us?
Guth. Yes!
Els. What ransom wilt thou take?
Guth. Thy husband's crown!
Els. Alas! he will not ransom us with that!
Alf. He should not!
Guth. Why?
Alf. He wears it for his people.
The day he put it on he vow'd himself
Of them the father! To their parent land
It wedded him! His proper consort she!
'Twixt him and them, he knows not wife, or child,
He dares allow to stand!
Guth. Minstrel, thou ravest!
He has not nature, who 'gainst nature's law
Could so deny his heart!
Alf. He may have more!
Guth. What?
Alf. The command of her. The attribute
Of kings who feel the import of their titles.
Which stops their ears against her piercing cries!
Which shuts their eyes against her thrilling looks!
Which lifts them so 'bove earth, they seem as though
They sat in some attendant, brighter sphere,
Wherefrom they look'd and ruled her!
Guth. Well thou said'st
Thy world was of the air! Thou dost not speak
Of things of earth! Thy sayings are not sooth!
I would thy king were here to prove thee but
A dreamer! With those jewels in his eye,
He would not see his crown! Yea, though it shone
Bright as it did before I thinn'd its studs!
Could'st find thy king?
Alf. I could.
Guth. Go seek him, then.
And when thou find'st him, greet him from me thus—
"*Thy queen and son are now in Guthrum's power,*
Pay thou but homage to the Dane, they're free."
Alf. I take my leave.
Els. Guthrum. A boon!

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Guth. What is't?
Els. I'd send a message to my lord!
Guth. Thou shalt.
Stand you apart, that freely they confer.
Els. And dost thou go; and wilt thou leave us here?
Alf. I must. Alas! thou know'st not what thou say'st!
Els. Thou'lt leave us here! Dost thou not love our child?
Alf. Beyond my life!
Els. And me?
Alf. Beyond our child!
Els. And must thou leave me? Oh! I have search'd for thee
Many, and many a day! Now fear'd thee dead!
Now hoped thee living! Search'd for thee alone!
One falling now; and now another off;
With my strong love unequal to keep pace.
Sleeping in woods and caves! On foot by dawn,
Ne'er giving o'er till night again! Now food,
Now nothing! Scantily I fared to-day;
Yet 'twas not hunger brought me here, but thou,
In desperate hope to find thee! Art thou found,
But to be lost again?
Alf. So were I found,
Went I not instant hence. Look in my eyes,
And read the husband and the father there,
In nature's undissembling language vouch'd!
But, hear the king!
Els. Well!
Alf. Paramount of all,
My public function! Husband—father—friend—
All titles, and all ties are merged in that!
Approve thyself the consort of a king!
I leave thee to return to thee. Return,
With freedom for thy child—for thee—myself—
For all—for all must perish, or be free!
And soon I come! So cheer thy heart with hope!
Farewell!
Els. [*aloud.*] You'll bear my duty to my lord.
Alf. I will.
Els. Your hand that you will keep your word.

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Alf. There, lady.
Els. Be thy hand my missive! Thus—
Thus with my tears I write my errand on't—
And with my lips—a faithful signet—seal it!
O, countryman! perhaps nor he nor thou
Shalt ever see me more! I feel as one
Amerced of life—that shakes a hand with all—
And asks a blessing from the meanest tongue!
Thy blessing, minstrel, ere thy mistress dies.
Alf. What love would ask to light on head beloved—
What faith and virtue Heaven's own warrant have
To ask of Heaven—light on thy honour'd head!
Edr. I'll see him eye to eye, ere he departs.
Alf. Farewell!
Edr. Stay, minstrel. Let me see thy face!
[EDR. *stops* ALF. *forcibly.*
Os. All's lost! [*half drawing his sword.*]
Alf. [*turning fully and sternly upon* EDR.] There,
Traitor! [EDR., *utterly confounded, staggers back.*
Os. Fly, my liege! Away.
[ALF., EDWY, *and* OS. *go out.*
Guth. What moves thee, Edric? What's the matter?
Speak!
Why is thine eye-ball fix'd, thy mouth agape?
What ails thy blood, that it forsakes thy cheek?
Why shakes thy frame?
Edr. My liege!
Guth. Out with it!
Edr. The minstrel!
Guth. What of the minstrel?
Edr. Oswith plays thee false!
No minstrel leaves the camp; but Oswith thence,
Treacherous to thee, conducts thine enemy,
Alfred, the Saxon King!
Guth. Ha! Follow them.
Stop his retreat! Away! Alive or dead,
Have them before us! [EDR., OTHO, *and others go out.*
Els. Mercy! Guthrum! Mercy! [*Clashing of swords.*
Guth. Remove her!
Els. Where's the lightning! What! no bolt

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To blast the impious hand that threatens death,
To his anointed head. O mercy! mercy!
[*She is forced off*, EDITH *following with the child.*
Edr. [*without.*] Traitor, give way.
Os. [*without.*] Make way—for none I'll give.
[*The fighting continues.*
Guth. Who aids him? Is there treason in the camp,
That thus the contest lasts? Give me my sword.
Ina. [*kneeling to* GUTH.] My father!
Guth. [*not heeding her.*] Ho! my buckler and my spear!
With mine own hand will I transfix him!
Ina. Father!
Enter EDRIC, *wounded.*
Edr. At last, my lord, we've overpower'd him.
Guth. Whom?
Edr. Oswith.
Guth. And Alfred?
Edr. He has escaped, I fear!
Guth. Lay Oswith in chains.
Ina. My father!
Guth. To the god
I give him! Odin, take him! He is thine!
By thy victorious spear he bleeds to thee. [EDR. *goes out.*
Give him my child, the traitor! Give him my blood!
I'd pour it out upon the altar first!
I would with mine own hand! I'd look on her!
And do it! Look on her! Up, girl, and hence!
Ha! Do I see a statue, or my child?
That cheek is marble by its hue!—Those eyes—
The chisel makes as good, for any touch
Of sense that's in them! What is it I've done?
Oh! they have loved and pin'd, and loved again
As fresh as ever! Take her to her couch!
She'll sleep—will she sleep? There, gently! I am
From fire to ice with looking on her. Ha! [grown
For what have I done this? Stand you all here?
What! have I paid so dearly for the prize,
And do you let it go? Pursue! Pursue!
[*They go out.*

END OF ACT IV.

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ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Ina's Tent.*

A Recess in the centre, with a curtain drawn before it.

Enter GUTHRUM, EDITH, *and* OSCAR.

Guth. What say the priests?

Osc. You may not spare his life!
Your oath to Odin must be kept, unless
His country he forswears, and serves the god—
Conditions which he spurns. Would else the tide
Of your great nation's prosperous fortune ebb
To an eternal drought! Among the ranks
They run, thy oath reiterating, and, with words
Ambiguous, starting fears, you may retract,
And curse your people!

Guth. Let their altar reek!
Blood rain upon them till it drown them! Leave
The tent!

Osc. Shall they prepare to sacrifice?

Guth. Tell them, if for command of mine they wait,
I will not give it!—No! not for their god!
She speaks not? [Osc. *goes out.*

Edith. Nay, my lord, at times a word;
But none that leads to certain inference—

Guth. Has she not slept?

Edith. Nought but unnatural sleep—
Rest that might pass for wakefulness—that scarce
Doth shut the lid—which weariness itself
Beholding, ere 'twould taste, would watch; it seems
So far from sweet. All listlessness without,
While all within is stirring!

Guth. I'll not see her.

Edith. My lord?

Guth. I did not speak; or if I did,
'Twas not to thee! I thought myself a father!
I thought as never father loved his child
I loved my Ina! 'Twas my pride to show it;
Yea, even when she ruled me like a child!

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I used to think that of my fiercest mood
She was the mistress that from my wildest flight
Could call me, if my eye but lit on her,
As the loved lure the falcon!—and I've kill'd her!
I'm not a father!—I did never love her
But as a child—a toy! Come, show her to me!
Undraw the curtain! He that makes a corse
Of what he loves, may sure be flint enough
To look upon't.

[EDITH *undraws the curtain, and* INA *is discovered sitting in a state of fixed abstraction.* EDITH *raises her, and leads her forward to a couch,* INA *moving as if it were mechanically.*

Leave us to ourselves. [EDITH *goes out.*
Why, 'tis enough to make the sickly heart
Break out in laughter, when the very work
Our eyes could weep them tearless at, our hands
May boast the making of!

[*Approaches, and sits down beside her.*

My Ina! Ina!—
My child! you'll speak to me?—What, are you ill?
How feel you?—You look well!—There, my own girl,
Lie in your father's bosom!—Speak to him!
What say'st thou, sweet?—Wast not about to speak?
Thou wast. Go on—go on! Speak to me Ina;
Or I'll go mad! Do'st hear?—On my knees,
I pray you speak to me!—Now, this is wilful!
Away!—you but dissemble!—'Tis put on!—
For shame, for shame! You've seen my eyes in tears!
You've seen my knees upon the ground!—You know
It is your father—your old father, and
You'll not speak to him!—Think you he can't see?
Why, any one could do't! To fix the eye
And keep the visage motionless, and sit
As you were riveted to your seat! A child
Were scant of wit that lack'd such obvious power—
Of 'simulation! I renounce you, Ina! [*Going.*
Will you not speak to me, my child? Speak to me!

[*Returns.*

A word—a whisper—anything!—a sign—
To show me that you are not worse than dead—

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Alive, and just the same! I can be rash!
I can give way to fury!—I will try
If life be in thy heart!
[*Draws his dagger, and rushes up to her.*
I'd scare a stone!
[*Wild discordant music is heard without.*
INA *starts up and clasps her hands.*
Guth. Ha!
Ina. There 'tis!
Guth. She speaks!—She is alive!
Ina. I've listen'd for't
So long, I fear'd 'twould never come!
Guth. What, Ina? [*Music again.*
Ina. Again!
Guth. They do prepare to lead him forth;
The sacrifice will presently begin!
They make a pretext of their god to mock
My power!
Ina. He's ready!—Let me go to him!
Guth. To whom? Thy lover?
Ina. I should like to get
My father's blessing first!
Guth. Thou hast it, Ina!
Ina. I know I have. Who says he does not love me?
I'd not believe it, though he were to kill me!
He'd do't in madness, and he'd kill himself
When he had found he had done it! Bless his Ina?
He always blesses me—at morning when
He sees me first, and then, again, at night;
Yea, ofttimes through the day! He'd bless me though
I broke his heart; and I'll bless him, although
He has broken mine!
Guth. She knows me not!
Ina. We'll wed
As never lovers did. We'll have our nuptials
Of a new fashion. Who'd be bid to them
Let him bring tears with him, he's welcome—such
As gush with sobs! We'll have no smiles at them!
The meanest churl gets handfuls when he weds!
Nor songs! such minstrelsy a beggar buys
For thanks! No, give us shrieks! and laughter! but

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Such laughter as it withers joy to hear !
As breaketh from the heart of madness ! as
Resounds from lips that wish their owners dead !
Guth. What mean those words, my child ?
Ina. I'll wed him as
Ne'er wedded maid, to let him never from
My side ; but dwell in such entrancement with him,
The day for us may go without his sun,
And night without her cloud ! All converse cease,
Of tongue or eye ; that not ourselves shall break
The silence sweet of our deep ecstacy.
Guth. Perception's all within ; without is none.
Passion hath drunk up sense ! I feel a touch
Of her condition while I look upon her—
Go mad ! You had a daughter yesterday—
Brag of her now. Point to her cheek, and ask
If ever grew such smiles as blossom there !
And bid the ear that listens to her, note
The sweetness that it feasts on ! [*Music.*] Hark ! thou'rt call'd !
What ! not go through the task thou hast begun
So bravely ? Slay thy child, and finish it !
[*Rushes out.*
Ina. [*Alone.*] They'd thwart a maid in her first love, they would ?
They think it easy, but they'll find it hard !
When first they said I should become a bride,
Wondering how I would deck me, I ran through
The ranks of fairest flowers to pick me one
To set it in my bosom, and I remember
It was a rose I pitch'd on—there's the rose !
[*Draws a dagger, and returns it to her bosom.*

[*Music.*]

The rites begin,—I will steal after them,
And watch the time ! I'm coming to thee, Oswith !
I'll show thee how a Danish maid can love ! [*Goes out.*

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SCENE II.—*Selwood Forest.*

Enter ODDUNE *and* OSWALD, *meeting.*

Od. No sign of Alfred?
Osw. None! Our scouts have all
Return'd, dishearten'd with their fruitless search.
Od. Where can he linger—with so fair a welcome
Impatient waiting him, as he would meet
From yonder gallant bands? The spirits now
That bear their crests so high, from his delay
To lead them on to action, will anon
Begin to droop—perchance may quite subside!
Osw. How many do we muster?
Od. By the last
Return, six thousand men.
Osw. The field shows fair!
Od. Fair cause—fair field! Who'd e'er expect so soon
To see the armour burnish'd up again
They cast aside for good! A pity 'twere
What shows such thrift should not be turn'd to use,
But, bootless, thrown away! They will not fight
Unless the king commands them!
Osw. See, my lord,
What movement's that?
Od. Here's one will tell us.
Edg. [*entering.*] Be
Prepared, my lord. The soldiers clamour for
The king, and doubts are spreading through the ranks;
You humour them—he will not come to lead them.
Their chiefs conduct them hither, from your own lips
Assurance to receive, and fair encouragement.

Enter EGBERT, KENRICK, ARTHUR, *Chief, and Soldiers.*

Eg. Now Kenrick, speak! Say what the soldiers want.
Od. Well, gallant friends! is England to be free?
Shall we change places with our conquerors,
Or still endure the yoke?
Ken. We want the king!

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Let him appear, we cannot meet the foe
Too soon!
Od. As surely shall you see him, as
You long to see the foe!
Ken. But when, my lord?
'Tis that we'd know! When was the king the last
Upon the field? Has he not ever, on
The eve of battle, earlier than his chiefs,
Been out; with looks of ardour heartening us?—
Our morning sun, that never clouded rose—
Enduing us with life and vigour new!
At most we muster bare six thousand men
To meet the Danish host! The king among us
Would make our numbers treble! Show us the king.
The only waving of his plume in battle
Were worth a hundred spears in hands as bold
As ever brandish'd weapon!
Od. What, and if
Indeed he should not come? Ought you to feel
Your tyrant's feet upon your necks the less?
Your king is present in his cause! Be that
Your king! [ALF. *enters, still disguised.*
Whoever leads you, meet the Dane!
I speak not, friends, because I'm next in place!
I care not for myself! Point out my post;
The van, the rear; I'll be content to take
My stand beside the man of meanest note
Among you! Make yon minstrel without helm
Or sword your leader, I will follow him!
So that I fight, I care not in what rank!
Let him who makes the absence of his king,
Plea to desert his country and his king,
Fall off! So Heaven sustain me in the cause,
Although our Alfred's presence now would add
Ten other richer lives to mine; yet say
He should not come, this faithful sword I draw
I will not sheathe till it has struck a blow
For liberty!
Eg. I second you, brave Oddune.
Osw. And so do I!
Od. And so will every man,

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Unless there be among the people one
That does not love his king!
Ken. No, Oddune, no!
The people live but for their king!
Alf. [*discovering himself.*] The king
Lives only for his people! Oh, my people!
You are the drops of blood that make your king!
And do I see you once again in arms!
[*Bursts into tears. The chiefs and general soldiers seem affected.*
O friends! Why draw your hands across your eyes,
If mine should be ashamed of what they do?
We've met again, my friends! Who is the foe
Shall sunder us again? O England! England!
Too fair—too richly gifted not to tempt
The spoiler—well that thou hast sons too true
To leave thee to his ravine! Thou'lt be free
Till thou art childless! Think not, gallant friends,
An hour I've squander'd that was due to you,
And to our common country! I have seen
The Danish camp!
Od. Their camp, my liege!
Alf. Have stood
In Guthrum's very presence! That disguise
Will tell thee how. They'd fall an easy prey
To half our numbers! Friends! a royal stake
I've laid upon your heads that you will win
The day!
Od. What stake, my liege?
Alf. Your prince and queen!
They're in the spoiler's power. I might, indeed,
Have ransom'd them, but what he ask'd your king could not afford to pay.
Od. What was't, my liege?
Alf. My people, Oddune.
Eg. In the spoiler's power
Our prince and queen! What wait we for?
Od. For nothing
But the king's word to move upon the foe!
Alf. Upon him, then! Now think you on the things

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You most do love ! Husbands and fathers on
Their wives and children—lovers upon their mistresses—
And all upon their country ! When you use
Your weapons, think on the beseeching eyes
To whet them could have lent you tears for water.
Oh, now be men or never ! From your hearths
Thrust the unbidden feet, that from their nooks
Your aged fathers drove—your wives and babes !
The couches your fair-handed daughters used
To spread, let not the vaunting stranger press,
Weary from spoiling you ! Your roofs that hear
The wanton riot of the intruding guest
That mocks their masters—clear them for the sake
Of the manhood, to which all that's precious clings
Else perishes. The land that bore you—oh !
Do honour to her ! Let her glory in
Your breeding ;—rescue her—revenge her, or
Ne'er call her mother more ! Come on, my friends !
And where you take your stand upon the field,
Thence, howsoever you advance, resolve
A foot you'll ne'er recede, while from the tongues
Of womanhood and childhood, helplessness
Invokes you to be strong ! Come on ! Come on !
I'll bring you to the foe ! And when you meet him,
Strike hard ! Strike home ! Strike while a blow
Is in an arm ! Strike till you're free, or fall !

[*They go out.*

SCENE III.—*A Wood.*

The statue of Odin in the centre ; before it an altar prepared for sacrifice. Enter procession of sacrifice, in the following order :—Danish Chief, with a body of Danish Soldiers ; a body of Danish Chiefs, and AMUND, EDRIC, *and* GUTHRUM ; *a body of Danish Priests ; Assistants with torches ; Boys carrying censers ; one Boy with a cushion, on which the knife of sacrifice is laid ;* Chief Priest of Odin ; OSWITH ; *a body of Danish Soldiers. The procession marches to the following chorus :—*

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Prepare the faggot—light the brand—
The victim's ready for the God!
The knife is bare in the sacred hand,
That on the altar pours the blood!
Prepare—prepare—prepare—
Great Odin's rites
The mortal who slights,
His roof shall blaze in peace—his spear shall break in war!

Guth. Saxon! Thou hast of life a moment yet
At thy command—use it for life—for love—
For liberty! But say the word, at once
The weapon, ready for thy blood, is sheath'd,
Unstain'd and harmless!

Os. I'm prepared to die!

Priest. Saxon!

Os. I come!

Priest. Come! Bare his breast! Odin, receive thy victim!

Ina [*rushing in*]. Oswith, I wed thee thus!

[*She is on the point of plunging the dagger into her heart;* Os. *bursts from the* Priest *and arrests her arm.*

Os. Hold, Ina, hold!
Thou shalt not die with Oswith!

Guth. Oswith, live!
Although the God himself demanded him,
He shall not die who saves my Ina's life!

Priest. The servants of the God protect his rights!

Danish Soldiers [*rushing in*]. The Saxon's in the camp, and down upon us!

Alf. [*without.*] Press on—press on—the first that comes to blows
Is the king's 'squire! Press on!

[*The Danes front the stage on which the Saxons are coming, who enter, headed by* ALF. *Danes are driven off;* ALF. *and* GUTH. *engage;* GUTH. *is disarmed.*

Alf. Guthrum, live
The friend of Alfred! Serve the God he serves!
To wear a crown thou need'st not fight for one,

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Except to keep it. Fair Northumbria
Receives thee for her King—my queen and son!
[OD. *leads on* ELS. *and* ETH.

Enter EGBERT *and* EDRIC, *guarded.*

Alf. Who's he?
Eg. A traitor to our cause, my lord—
Whose sword has made more havoc 'mongst our people,
Than any ten of your foes! His hand, accurst!
It was that fired the hold where slept your queen
And son.
Ken. and others. Despatch him!
Alf. Hold! This victory
I will perpetuate by such an act
As shall from future kings remove the power
To make their public functions pander to
Their private gust. Select twelve men, his peers,
And swearing them upon the book of God,
As they shall answer at His judgment day,
To try their prisoner fairly. Let the charge
Be brought before them; and as they decide,
Be finally his innocence or guilt
Establish'd. Hence! Hereby shall private right,
Which, guarded, fortifieth, more than arms,
The conservator of the public weal,
Be sacred even from the sceptre's touch!
Thus to a people faithful to their king,
A faithful king an institution gives
That makes the lowly cottage lofty as
The regal dome—holds justice paramount
Of all—before her throne the peasant and
The king himself on equal footing brings!
A gift which you'll preserve for ever whole!
From which, as from your blood, pollution keep!
Which, if you're asked to render back, by all
You owe yourselves, your country, and the throne,
You'll answer no! Which, when you'd name, you'll
Trial by Jury! [call
Guth. Great the victory
That kings gain o'er themselves. Blest are the heads
That bow to sway like thine!

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Alf. My countrymen!
Sons of the sea—henceforth her restless plain
Shall be your battle-field! There shall you meet
The threat'ning storm of war! There shall it burst,
Its rage unfelt at home—its din unheard!
You've fought like England's true-born sons, to-day!
You've taught a lesson to her sons to come!
By your example fired, should e'er a foe
In after times invade her envied shores,
Her sons, of all descriptions and degrees,
To succour her shall grapple soul and hand,
Rampart her throne with living walls of hearts,
And teach the fell invader that the deep
Embraced her, never to betray her glory!

END OF ALFRED THE GREAT.

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THE HUNCHBACK:

A PLAY.

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Hosted by Google

TO

MAJOR FRANCIS CAMPBELL

(LATE OF THE 8TH, OR KING'S OWN.)

My Dear Sir,

As an enthusiastic admirer of the Drama, and as a gentleman from whom, solely on account of my connexion with it, I have received the most flattering attention, you are entitled to the Dedication of this Play, and it is accordingly inscribed to you,

By your grateful servant,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

1832.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT COVENT GARDEN IN 1832.)

Julia	MISS F. KEMBLE.
Helen	MISS TAYLOR.
Master Walter	MR. J. S. KNOWLES.
Sir Thomas Clifford	MR. C. KEMBLE.
Lord Tinsel	MR. WRENCH.
Master Wilford	MR. J. MASON.
Modus	MR. ABBOTT.
Master Heartwell	MR. EVANS.
Gaylove	MR. HENRY.
Fathom	MR. MEADOWS.
Thomas	MR. BARNES.
Stephen	MR. PAYNE.
Williams	MR. IRWIN.
Simpson	MR. BRADY.
Waiter	MR. HEATH.
Holdwell	MR. BENDER.
Servants	MR. J. COOPER, MR. LOLLETT.

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THE HUNCHBACK.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Tavern.*

On one side SIR THOMAS CLIFFORD, *at a table, with wine before him; on the other* MASTER WILFORD, GAYLOVE, HOLDWELL, *and* SIMPSON, *likewise taking wine.*

Wilf. Your wine, sirs; your wine! you do not justice to mine host of the Three Tuns, nor credit to yourselves; I swear the beverage is good! It is as palatable poison as you will purchase within a mile round Ludgate! Drink, gentlemen; make free. You know I am a man of expectations; and hold my money as light as the purse in which I carry it.

Gay. We drink, Master Wilford; not a man of us has been chased as yet.

Wilf. But you fill not fairly, sirs! Look at my measure! Wherefore a large glass, if not for a large draught? Fill, I pray you, else let us drink out of thimbles. This will never do for the friends of the nearest of kin to the wealthiest peer in Britain.

Gay. We give you joy, Master Wilford, of the prospect of advancement which has so unexpectedly opened to you.

Wilf. Unexpectedly indeed! But yesterday arrived the news that the Earl's only son and heir had died! and to-day has the Earl himself been seized with a mortal illness.—His dissolution is looked for hourly: and I, his cousin in only the third degree, known to

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him but to be unnoticed by him—a decayed gentleman's son—glad of the title and revenues of a scrivener's clerk,—am the undoubted successor to his estates and coronet.

Gay. Have you been sent for?

Wilf. No; but I have certified to his agent, Master Walter, the Hunchback, my existence, and peculiar propinquity; and momentarily expect him here.

Gay. Lives there any one that may dispute your claim,—I mean vexatiously?

Wilf. Not a man, Master Gaylove. I am the sole remaining branch of the family tree.

Gay. Doubtless you look for much happiness from this change of fortune?

Wilf. A world! Three things have I an especial passion for. The finest hound, the finest horse, and the finest wife in the kingdom, Master Gaylove.

Gay. The finest wife!

Wilf. Yes, sir: I marry. Once the Earldom comes into my line, I shall take measures to perpetuate its remaining there. I marry, sir! I do not say that I shall love. My heart has changed mistresses too often to settle down in one servitude now, sir. But fill, I pray you, friends. This, if I mistake not, is the day whence I shall date my new fortunes; and, for that reason, hither have I invited you, that having been so long my boon companions, you shall be the first to congratulate me.

Enter Waiter.

Waiter. You are wanted, Master Wilford.

Wilf. By whom?

Waiter. One Master Walter.

Wilf. His Lordship's agent! News, sirs! Show him in! [Waiter *goes out.*

My heart's a prophet, sirs.—The Earl is dead.

Enter Master Walter.

Well, Master Walter. How accost you me?

Wal. As your impatience shows me you would have me.—

My lord, the Earl of Rochdale!

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Gay. Give you joy!
Hold. All happiness, my lord!
Simp. Long life and health unto your lordship!
Gay. Come!
We'll drink to his lordship's health! 'Tis two o'clock,
We'll e'en carouse till midnight! Health, my lord!
Hold. My lord, much joy to you!
Simp. All good to your lordship!
Wal. Give something to the dead!
Gay. Give what?
Wal. Respect!
He has made the living! First to him that's gone,
Say "Peace,"—and then with decency to revels.
Gay. What means the knave by revels?
Wal. Knave?
Gay. Ay, knave!
Wal. Go to! Thou'rt flushed with wine!
Gay. Thou sayest false!
Though didst thou need a proof thou speakest true,
I'd give thee one. Thou seest but one lord here,
And I see two!
Wal. Reflect'st thou on my shape?
Thou art a villain!
Gay. [*starting up.*] Ha!
Wal. A coward, too!
Draw. [*Drawing his sword.*]
Gay. Only mark him! how he struts about!
How laughs his straight sword at his noble back.
Wal. Does it? It cuffs thee for a liar then!
[*Strikes* GAY. *with his sword.*
Gay. A blow!
Wal. Another, lest you doubt the first!
Gay. His blood on his own head! I'm for you, sir!
[*Draws.*
Clif. Hold, sir! This quarrel's mine!
[*Coming forward and drawing.*
Wal. No man shall fight for me, sir!
Clif. By your leave.
Your patience, pray! My lord, for so I learn
Behoves me to accost you—for your own sake
Draw off your friend!

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Wal. Not till we have a bout, sir!
Clif. My lord, your happy fortune ill you greet!
Ill greet it those who love you—greeting thus
The herald of it!
Wal. Sir, what's that to you?
Let go my sleeve!
Clif. My lord, if blood be shed
On the fair dawn of your prosperity,
Look not to see the brightness of its day.
'Twill be o'ercast throughout!
Gay. My lord, I'm struck!
Clif. You gave the first blow, and the hardest one!
Look, sir; if swords you needs must measure, I'm
Your mate, not he.
Wal. I'm mate for any man.
Clif. Draw off your friend, my lord, for your own sake!
Wilf. Come, Gaylove! let's have another room.
Gay. With all my heart, since 'tis your lordship's will.
Wil. That's right! Put up! Come, friends!
[WILF. *and Friends go out.*
Wal. I'll follow him!
Why do you hold me? 'Tis not courteous of you!
Think'st thou I fear them? Fear! I rate them but
As dust! dross! offals! Let me at them!—Nay,
Call you this kind? then kindness know I not;
Nor do I thank you for't! Let go, I say!
Clif. Nay, Master Walter, they're not worth your wrath.
Wal. How know you me for Master Walter? By
My hunchback, eh!—my stilts of legs and arms,
The fashion more of ape's than man's? Aha!
So you have heard them too—their savage gibes
As I pass on,—"There goes my lord!" aha!
God made me, sir, as well as them and you.
'Sdeath! I demand of you, unhand me, sir!
Clif. There, sir, you're free to follow them! Go forth,
And I'll go too: so on your wilfulness
Shall fall whate'er of evil may ensue.
Is't fit you waste your choler on a burr?

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The nothings of the town; whose sport it is
To break their villain jests on worthy men,
The graver still the fitter! Fie for shame!
Regard what such would say? So would not I,
No more than heed a cur.
Wal. You're right, sir; right.
For twenty crowns! So there's my rapier up!
You've done me a good turn against my will;
Which, like a wayward child, whose pet is off,
That made him restive under wholesome check,
I now right humbly own, and thank you for.
Clif. No thanks, good Master Walter, owe you me!
I'm glad to know you, sir.
Wal. I pray you, now,
How did you learn my name? Guess'd I not right?
Was't not my comely hunch that taught it you?
Clif. I own it.
Wal. Right, I know it; you tell truth.
I like you for 't.
Clif. But when I heard it said
That Master Walter was a worthy man,
Whose word would pass on 'change soon as his bond;
A liberal man—for schemes of public good
That sets down tens, where others units write;
A charitable man—the good he does,
That's told of, not the half: I never more
Could see the hunch on Master Walter's back.
Wal. You would not flatter a poor citizen?
Clif. Indeed, I flatter not!
Wal. I like your face:
A frank and honest one! Your frame's well knit,
Proportioned, shaped!
Clif. Good sir!
Wal. Your name is Clifford—
Sir Thomas Clifford. Humph! You're not the heir
Direct to the fair baronetcy? He
That was, was drown'd abroad. Am I not right?
Your cousin, was 't not? So, succeeded you
To rank and wealth, your birth ne'er promised you.
Clif. I see you know my history.
Wal. I do.

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You're lucky who conjoin the benefits
Of penury and abundance; for I know
Your father was a man of slender means.
You do not blush, I see. That's right! Why should you?
What merit to be dropp'd on fortune's hill?
The honour is to mount it. You'd have done it;
For you were train'd to knowledge, industry,
Frugality, and honesty,—the sinews
That surest help the climber to the top,
And keep him there. I have a clerk, Sir Thomas,
Once served your father; there's the riddle for you.
Humph! I may thank you for my life to-day.
Clif. I pray you say not so.
Wal. But I will say so!
Because I think so, know so, feel so, sir!
Your fortune, I have heard, I think, is ample;
And doubtless you live up to't?
Clif. 'Twas my rule,
And is so still, to keep my outlay, sir,
A span within my means.
Wal. A prudent rule.
The turf is a seductive pastime!
Clif. Yes.
Wal. You keep a racing stud? You bet?
Clif. No, neither.
'Twas still my father's precept—"Better owe
A yard of land to labour, than to chance
Be debtor for a rood!"
Wal. 'Twas a wise precept.
You've a fair house—you'll get a mistress for it?
Clif. In time!
Wal. In time! 'Tis time thy choice were made.
Is't not so yet? Or is thy lady love
The newest still thou see'st?
Clif. Nay, not so.
I'd marry, Master Walter, but old use—
For since the age of thirteen, I have lived
In the world—has made me jealous of the thing
That flatter'd me with hope of profit. Bargains
Another would snap up, might be for me

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Till I had turn'd and turn'd them! Speculations,
That promised twenty, thirty, forty, fifty,
Ay, cent. per cent. returns, I would not launch in,
When others were afloat, and out at sea!
Whereby I made small gains, but miss'd great losses;
As ever then I look'd before I leap'd,
So do I now.

Wal. Thou'rt all the better for it!
Let's see! Hand free—heart whole—well favour'd—so!
Rich, titled! Let that pass!—kind, valiant, prudent—
Sir Thomas, I can help thee to a wife,
Hast thou the luck to win her?

Clif. Master Walter!
You jest!

Wal. I do not jest.—I like you! mark—
I like you, and I like not every one!
I say a wife, sir, can I help you to,
The pearly texture of whose dainty skin
Alone were worth thy baronetcy! Form
And feature has she, wherein move and glow
The charms that in the marble cold and still
Cull'd by the sculptor's jealous skill and join'd there,
Inspire us! Sir, a maid, before whose feet
A duke—a duke might lay his coronet,
To lift her to his state, and partner her!
A fresh heart too! A young fresh heart, sir; one
That Cupid has not toy'd with, and a warm one.
Fresh, young, and warm! mark that! a mind to boot
Wit, sir; sense, taste;—a garden strictly tended—
Where nought but what is costly flourishes.
A consort for a king, sir! Thou shalt see her.

Clif. I thank you, Master Walter! As you speak,
Methinks I see me at the altar foot,
Her hand fast lock'd in mine—the ring put on.
My wedding-bell rings merry in my ear;
And round me throng glad tongues that give me joy
To be the bridegroom of so fair a bride!

Wal. What! sparks so thick? We'll have a blaze anon!

Servant [*entering.*] The chariot's at the door

Wal. It waits in time!

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Sir Thomas, it shall bear thee to the bower
Where dwells this fair, for she's no city belle,
But e'en a sylvan goddess.
Clif. Have with you.
Wal. You'll bless the day you served the Hunchback, sir! [*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*A Garden before a Country House.*

Enter JULIA *and* HELEN.

Helen. I like not, Julia, this your country life.
I'm weary on't!
Julia. Indeed? So am not I!
I know no other; would no other know.
Helen. You would no other know! Would you not know
Another relative?—another friend—
Another house—another anything,
Because the ones you have already please you?
That's poor content! Would you not be more rich,
More wise, more fair? The song that last you learn'd
You fancy well; and therefore shall you learn
No other song? Your virginal, 'tis true,
Hath a sweet tone; but does it follow thence,
You shall not have another virginal?
You may, love, and a sweeter one; and so
A sweeter life may find, than this you lead!
Julia. I seek it not. Helen, I'm constancy!
Helen. So is a cat, a dog, a silly hen,
An owl, a bat,—where they are wont to lodge
That still sojourn, nor care to shift their quarters.
Thou'rt constancy? I am glad I know thy name!
The spider comes of the same family,
That in his meshy fortress spends his life,
Unless you pull it down and scare him from it.
And so thou'rt constancy? Art proud of that?
I'll warrant thee I'll match thee with a snail
From year to year that never leaves his house!
Such constancy forsooth!—A constant grub
That houses ever in the self-same nut

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Where he was born, till hunger drives him out,
Or plunder breaketh through his castle wall!
And so, in very deed, thou'rt constancy!
Julia. Helen, you know the adage of the tree;—
I've ta'en the bend. This rural life of mine,
Enjoin'd me by an unknown father's will,
I've led from infancy. Debarr'd from hope
Of change, I ne'er have sigh'd for change. The town
To me was like the moon, for any thought
I e'er should visit it—nor was I school'd
To think it half so fair!
Helen. Not half so fair!
The town's the sun, and thou hast dwelt in night
E'er since thy birth, not to have seen the town!
Their women there are queens, and kings their men;
Their houses palaces!
Julia. And what of that?
Have your town palaces a hall like this?
Couches so fragrant? walls so high adorn'd?
Casements with such festoons, such prospects, Helen,
As these fair vistas have? Your kings and queens!
See me a May-day queen, and talk of them!
Helen. Extremes are ever neighbours. 'Tis a step
From one to the other! Were thy constancy
A reasonable thing—a little less
Of constancy—a woman's constancy—
I should not wonder wert thou ten years hence
The maid I know thee now; but, as it is,
The odds are ten to one, that this day year
Will see our May-day queen a city one.
Julia. Never! I'm wedded to a country life:
O, did you hear what Master Walter says!
Nine times in ten, the town's a hollow thing,
Where what things are is nought to what they show;
Where merit's name laughs merit's self to scorn!
Where friendship and esteem, that ought to be
The tenants of men's hearts, lodge in their looks
And tongues alone. Where little virtue, with
A costly keeper, passes for a heap;
A heap for none that has a homely one!
Where fashion makes the law—your umpire which

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You bow to, whether it has brains or not.
Where Folly taketh off his cap and bells,
To clap on Wisdom, which must bear the jest!
Where to pass current you must seem the thing,
The passive thing, that others think; and not
Your simple, honest, independent self!

Helen. Ay: so says Master Walter. See I not
What can you find in Master Walter, Julia,
To be so fond of him!

Julia. He's fond of me.
I've known him since I was a child. E'en then
The week I thought a weary, heavy one,
That brought not Master Walter. I had those
About me then that made a fool of me,
As children oft are fool'd; but more I loved
Good Master Walter's lesson than the play
With which they'd surfeit me. As I grew up,
More frequent Master Walter came, and more
I loved to see him. I had tutors then,
Men of great skill and learning—but not one
That taught like Master Walter. What they'd show me,
And I, dull as I was, but doubtful saw,—
A word from Master Walter made as clear
As daylight! When my schooling days were o'er—
That's now good three years past—three years—I vow
I'm twenty, Helen!—well, as I was saying,
When I had done with school, and all were gone,
Still Master Walter came! and still he comes,
Summer or winter—frost or rain. I've seen
The snow upon a level with the hedge,
Yet there was Master Walter!

Helen. Who comes here?
A carriage, and a gay one,—who alights?
Pshaw! Only Master Walter! What see you,
Which thus repairs the arch of the fair brow,
A frown was like to spoil?—A gentleman!
One of our town kings. Mark—how say you now?
Wouldst be a town queen, Julia? Which of us,
I wonder, comes he for?

Julia. For neither of us;
He's Master Walter's clerk, most like.

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Helen. Most like!
Mark him as he comes up the avenue;
So looks a clerk! A clerk has such a gait!
So does a clerk dress, Julia,—mind his hose—
They're very like a clerk's! a diamond loop
And button, note you, for his clerkship's hat,—
O, certainly a clerk! A velvet cloak,
Jerkin of silk, and doublet of the same,—
For all the world a clerk! See, Julia, see,
How Master Walter bows, and yields him place,
That he may first go in,—a very clerk!
I'll learn of thee, love, when I'd know a clerk.
Julia. I wonder who he is.
Helen. Wouldst like to know?
Wouldst, for a fancy, ride to town with him?
I prophesy he comes to take thee thither.
Julia. He ne'er takes me to town. No, Helen, no;
To town who will, a country life for me!
Helen. We'll see.

Enter FATHOM.

Fath. You're wanted, madam.
Julia [*embarrassed*]. Which of us?
Fath. You, madam.
Helen. Julia! what's the matter? Nay,
Mount not the rose so soon. He must not see it
A month hence. 'Tis love's flower, which once she wears,
The maid is all his own.
Julia. Go to!
Helen. Be sure
He comes to woo thee! He will bear thee hence;
He'll make thee change the country for the town.
Julia. I'm constancy. Name he the town to me,
I'll tell him what I think on't!
Helen. Then you guess
He comes a wooing?
Julia. I guess nought.
Helen. You do!
At your grave words, your lips, more honest, smile,
And show them to be traitors. Hie to him.

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Julia. Hie thee to soberness. [*Goes out.*
Helen. Ay, will I, when,
Thy bridemaid, I shall hie to church with thee.
Well, Fathom, who is come?
Fath. I know not.
Helen. What!
Didst thou not hear his name?
Fath. I did.
Helen. What is't?
Fath. I noted not.
Helen. What hast thou ears for, then?
Fath. What good were it for me to mind his name?
I do but what I must do. To do that
Is labour quite enough!
Wal. [*without.*] What, Fathom!
Fath. Here.
Wal. [*entering.*] Here, sirrah! Wherefore didst not come to me?
Fath. You did not bid me come.
Wal. I call'd thee.
Fath. Yes,
And I said, "Here;" and waited then to know
Your worship's will with me.
Wal. We go to town.
Thy mistress, thou, and all the house.
Fath. Well, sir?
Wal. Mak'st thou not ready then to go to town?
Hence, knave, despatch! [Fathom *goes out.*
Helen. Go we to town?
Wal. We do;
'Tis now her father's will she sees the town.
Helen. I'm glad on't. Goes she to her father?
Wal. No:
At the desire of thine, she for a term
Shares roof with thee.
Helen. I'm very glad on't.
Wal. What!
You like her then? I thought you would. 'Tis time
She sees the town.
Helen. It has been time for that
These six years.

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Wal. By thy wisdom's count. No doubt
You've told her what a precious place it is.
Helen. I have.
Wal. I even guess'd as much. For that
I told thee of her; brought thee here to see her;
And pray'd thee to sojourn a space with her;
That its fair space from thy too fair report,
Might strike a novice less,—so less deceive her.
I did not put thee under check.
Helen. 'Twas right,—
Else had I broken loose, and run the wilder!
So knows she not her father yet: that's strange.
I prithee how does mine?
Wal. Well—very well.
News for thee.
Helen. What?
Wal. Thy cousin is in town.
Helen. My cousin Modus?
Wal. Much do I suspect
That cousin's nearer to thy heart than blood.
Helen. Pshaw! Wed me to a musty library!
Love him who nothing loves but Greek and Latin!
But, Master Walter, you forget the main
Surpassing point of all! Who's come with you?
Wal. Ay, that's the question!
Helen. Is he soldier or
Civilian? lord or gentleman? He's rich,
If that's his chariot! Where is his estate?
What brings it in? Six thousand pounds a year?
Twelve thousand, may be! Is he bachelor,
Or husband? Bachelor I'm sure he is!
Comes he not hither wooing, Master Walter?
Nay, prithee, answer me!
Wal. Who says thy sex
Are curious? That they're patient, I'll be sworn;
And reasonable—very reasonable—
To look for twenty answers in a breath!
Come, thou shalt be enlightened—but propound
Thy questions one by one! Thou'rt far too apt
A scholar! My ability to teach
Will ne'er keep pace, I fear, with thine to learn.
[*They go out*

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SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the House.*

Enter JULIA, *followed by* CLIFFORD.

Julia. No more! I pray you, sir, no more!
Clif. I love you.
Julia. You mock me, sir!
Clif. Then is there no such thing
On earth as reverence. Honour filial, the fear
Of kings, the awe of supreme heaven itself,
Are only shows and sounds that stand for nothing.
I love you!
Julia. You have known me scarce a minute.
Clif. Say but a moment, still I say I love you.
Love's not a flower that grows on the dull earth;
Springs by the calendar; must wait for sun—
For rain;—matures by parts,—must take its time
To stem, to leaf, to bud, to blow. It owns
A richer soil, and boasts a quicker seed!
You look for it, and see it not; and lo!
E'en while you look, the peerless flower is up,
Consummate in the birth!
Julia. Is't fear I feel?
Why else should beat my heart? It can't be fear!
Something I needs must say. You're from the town;
How comes it, sir, you seek a country wife?
Methinks 'twill tax his wit to answer that.
Clif. In joining contrasts lieth love's delight.
Complexion, stature, nature, mateth it,
Not with their kinds, but with their opposites.
Hence hands of snow in palms of russet lie;
The form of Hercules affects the sylph's;
And breasts that case the lion's fear-proof heart
Find their loved lodge in arms where tremors dwell!
Haply for this, on Afric's swarthy neck,
Hath Europe's priceless pearl been seen to hang,
That makes the orient poor! So with degrees.
Rank passes by the circlet-graced brow,
Upon the forehead bare of notelessness
To print the nuptial kiss. As with degrees
So is't with habits; therefore I, indeed

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A gallant of the town, the town forsake,
To win a country wife.
Julia. His prompt reply
My backward challenge shames! Must I give o'er?
I'll try his wit again. Who marries me
Must lead a country life.
Clif. The life I'd lead!
But fools would fly from it; for O! 'tis sweet!
It finds the heart out, be there one to find;
And corners in't where store of pleasures lodge,
We never dreamed were there! It is to dwell
'Mid smiles that are not neighbours to deceit;
Music whose melody is of the heart,
And gifts that are not made for interest,—
Abundantly bestow'd by nature's cheek,
And voice, and hand! It is to live on life,
And husband it! It is to constant scan
The handiwork of Heaven! It is to con
Its mercy, bounty, wisdom, power! It is
To nearer see our God!
Julia. How like he talks
To Master Walter! Shall I give it o'er?
Not yet. Thou wouldst not live one half a year!
A quarter mightst thou for the novelty
Of fields and trees; but then it needs must be
In summer time, when they go dress'd.
Clif. Not it!
In any time—say winter! Fields and trees
Have charms for me in very winter time.
Julia. But snow may clothe them then.
Clif. I like them full
As well in snow.
Julia. You do?
Clif. I do.
Julia. But night
Will hide both snow and them, and that sets in
Ere afternoon is out. A heavy thing,
A country fireside in a winter's night,
To one bred in the town,—where winter's said,
For sun of gaiety and sportiveness,
To beggar shining summer.

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Clif. I should like
A country winter's night especially!
Julia. You'd sleep by the fire.
Clif. Not I; I'd talk to thee.
Julia. You'd tire of that!
Clif. I'd read to thee.
Julia. And that!
Clif. I'd talk to thee again.
Julia. And sooner tire
Than first you did, and fall asleep at last.
You'd never do to lead a country life.
Clif. You deal too harshly with me! Matchless maid,
As loved instructor brightens dullest wit,
Fear not to undertake the charge of me!
A willing pupil kneels to thee, and lays
His title and his fortune at your feet.
Julia. His title and his fortune!

Enter MASTER WALTER *and* HELEN.—JULIA, *disconcerted, retires with the latter.*—CLIFFORD *rises.*

Wal. So, Sir Thomas!
Aha! you husband time! well, was I right?
Is't not the jewel that I told you 'twas?
Wouldst thou not give thine eyes to wear it? Eh?
It has an owner though,—nay, start not,—one
That may be brought to part with't, and with whom
I'll stand thy friend—I will—I say, I will!
A strange man, sir, and unaccountable:
But I can humour him—will humour him
For thy sake, good Sir Thomas, for I like thee.
Well, is't a bargain? Come, thy hand upon it.
A word or two with thee.
[*They retire.* JULIA *and* HELEN *come forward.*
Julia. Go up to town!
Helen. Have I not said it ten times o'er to thee?
But if thou likest it not, protest against it.
Julia. Not if 'tis Master Walter's will.
Helen. What then?
Thou wouldst not break thy heart for Master Walter?
Julia. That follows not!

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Helen. What follows not?
Julia. That I
Should break my heart, because we go to town.
Helen. Indeed!—O that's another matter. Well,
I'd e'en advise thee then to do his will;
And ever after when I prophesy,
Believe me, Julia!
[*They retire.* MASTER WALTER *comes forward.*

Enter FATHOM.

Fath. So please you, Sir, a letter,—a post-haste letter!
The bearer on horseback, the horse in a foam—smoking
like a boiler at the heat—be sure a post-haste letter!
Wal. Look to the horse and rider.
[*Opens the letter and reads.*
What's this? A testament addressed to me,
Found in his lordship's escrutoire, and thence
Directed to be taken by no hand
But mine. My presence instantly required.
[SIR THOMAS, JULIA, *and* HELEN *come forward.*
Come, my mistresses,
You dine in town to-day. Your father's will
It is, my Julia, that you see the world,
And thou shalt see it in its best attire.
Its gayest looks—its richest finery
It shall put on for thee, that thou may'st judge
Betwixt it, and the rural life you've lived.
Business of moment I'm but just advised of,
Touching the will of my late noble master,
The earl of Rochdale, recently deceased,
Commands me for a time to leave thee there.
Sir Thomas, hand her to the chariot. Nay,
I tell thee true. We go indeed to town!
[*They go out.*

END OF ACT I.

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ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Master Heartwell's House.*

Enter FATHOM *and* THOMAS.

Thos. Well, Fathom, is thy mistress up?

Fath. She is, Master Thomas, and breakfasted.

Thos. She stands it well! 'Twas five, you say, when she came home; and wants it now three quarters of an hour of ten? Wait till her stock of country health is out.

Fath. 'Twill come to that, Master Thomas, before she lives another month in town! three, four, five, six o'clock are now the hours she keeps. 'Twas otherwise with her in the country. There, my mistress used to rise what time she now lies down.

Thos. Why, yes; she's changed since she came hither.

Fath. Changed, do you say, Master Thomas? Changed forsooth! I know not the thing in which she is not changed, saving that she is still a woman. I tell thee there is no keeping pace with her moods. In the country she had none of them. When I brought what she asked for, it was "Thank you, Fathom," and no more to do; but now, nothing contents her. Hark ye! were you a gentleman, Master Thomas,—for then you know you would be a different kind of man,—how many times would you have your coat altered?

Thos. Why, Master Fathom, as many times as it would take to make it fit me.

Fath. Good! But supposing it fitted thee at the first?

Thos. Then would I have it altered not at all.

Fath. Good! Thou wouldst be a reasonable gentleman. Thou wouldst have a conscience. Now hark to a tale about my lady's last gown. How many times, think you, took I it back to the sempstress?

Thos. Thrice, may be.

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Fath. Thrice, may be! Twenty times, may be; and not a turn too many for the truth on't. Twenty times, on the oath of the sempstress. Now mark me—can you count?

Thos. After a fashion.

Fath. You have much to be thankful for, Master Thomas; you London serving-men have a world of things, which we in the country never dream of. Now mark:—four times took I it back for the flounce; twice for the sleeves; three for the tucker. How many times in all is that?

Thos. Eight times to a fraction, Master Fathom.

Fath. What a master of figures you are! Eight times—now recollect that! And then found she fault with the trimmings. Now tell me how many times took I back the gown for the trimmings?

Thos. Eight times more, perhaps!

Fath. Ten times to a certainty. How many times makes that?

Thos. Eighteen, Master Fathom, by the rule of addition.

Fath. And how many times more will make twenty?

Thos. Twice, by the same rule.

Fath. Thou hast worked with thy pencil and slate, Master Thomas! Well, ten times, as I said, took I back the gown for the trimmings: and was she content after all? I warrant you no, or my ears did not pay for it. She wished, she said, that the slattern sempstress had not touched the gown, for nought had she done, but botched it. Now what think you had the sempstress done to the gown?

Thos. To surmise that, I must be learned in the sempstress's art.

Fath. The sempstress's art! Thou hast hit it! Oh, the sweet sempstress! The excellent sempstress! Mistress of her scissors and needles, which are pointless and edgeless to her art! The sempstress had done nothing to the gown yet raves and storms my mistress at her for having botched it in the making and mending; and orders her straight to make another one, which home the sempstress brings on Tuesday last.

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Thos. And found thy fair mistress as many faults with that?

Fath. Not one! She finds it a very pattern of a gown! A well sitting flounce! The sleeves a fit—the tucker a fit—the trimmings her fancy to a T—ha! ha! ha! and she praised the sempstress—ha! ha! ha! and she smiles at me, and I smile—ha! ha! ha! and the sempstress smiles—ha! ha! ha! Now why did the sempstress smile?

Thos. That she had succeeded so well in her art.

Fath. Thou hast hit it again. The jade must have been born a sempstress. If ever I marry she shall work for my wife. The gown was the same gown, and there was my mistress's twentieth mood!

Thos. What think you will Master Walter say when he comes back? I fear he'll hardly know his country maid again. Has she yet fixed her wedding-day?

Fath. She has, Master Thomas. I coaxed it from her maid. She marries, Monday week.

Thos. Comes not Master Walter back to-day?

Fath. Your master expects him. [*A ringing.*] Perhaps that's he. I prithee go and open the door; do, Master Thomas, do; for proves it my master, he'll surely question me.

Thos. And what should I do?

Fath. Answer him, Master Thomas, and make him none the wiser. He'll go mad, when he learns how my lady flaunts it! Go! open the door, I prithee. Fifty things, Master Thomas, know you, for one thing that I know; you can turn and twist a matter into any other kind of matter, and then twist and turn it back again, if needs be; so much you servants of the town beat us of the country, Master Thomas. Open the door, now; do, Master Thomas, do!

[*They go out.*

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SCENE II.—*A Garden with two Arbours.*

Enter MASTER HEARTWELL *and* MASTER WALTER, *meeting.*

Heart. Good Master Walter, welcome back again!
Wal. I'm glad to see you, Master Heartwell.
Heart. How,
I pray you, sped the weighty business which
So sudden call'd you hence?
Wal. Weighty, indeed!
What thou wouldst ne'er expect—wilt scarce believe!
Long hidden wrong, wondrously come to light,
And great right done! But more of this anon.
Now of my ward discourse! Likes she the town?
How does she? Is she well? Canst match me her,
Amongst your city maids?
Heart. Nor court ones neither!
She far outstrips them all!
Wal. I knew she would.
What else could follow in a maid so bred?
A pure mind, Master Heartwell!—not a taint
From intercourse with the distemper'd town;
With which all contact was wall'd out; until,
Matured in soundness, I could trust her to it,
And sleep amidst infection.
Heart. Master Walter!
Wal. Well?
Heart. Tell me, prithee, which is likelier
To plough a sea in safety?—he that's wont
To sail in it,—or he that by the chart
Is master of its soundings, bearings,—knows
Its headlands, havens, currents—where 'tis bold,
And where behoves to keep a good look-out.
The one will swim where sinks the other one?
Wal. The drift of this?
Heart. Do you not guess it?
Wal. Humph!
Heart. If you would train a maid to live in town,
Breed her not in the country!
Wal. Say you so?
And stands she not the test?

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Heart. As snow stands fire!
Your country maid has melted all away,
And plays the city lady to the height:—
Her mornings gives to mercers, milliners,
Shoemakers, jewellers, and haberdashers;
Her noons, to calls; her afternoons, to dressing;
Evenings, to plays and drums; and nights, to routs,
Balls, masquerades! Sleep only ends the riot,
Which waking still begins!
Wal. I'm all amaze!
How bears Sir Thomas this?
Heart. Why patiently;
Though one can see with pain.
Wal. She loves him? Ha!
That shrug is doubt! She'd ne'er consent to wed him
Unless she loved him!—never! Her young fancy
The pleasures of the town—new things—have caught.
Anon their hold will slacken; she'll become
Her former self again; to its old train
Of sober feelings will her heart return;
And then she'll give it wholly to the man
Her virgin wishes chose!
Heart. Here comes Sir Thomas;
And with him Master Modus.
Wal. Let them pass:
I would not see him till I speak with her.
[*They retire into one of the arbours.*

Enter CLIFFORD *and* MODUS.

Clif. A dreadful question is it, when we love,
To ask if love's return'd! I did believe
Fair Julia's heart was mine—I doubt it now.
But once last night she danced with me, her hand
To this gallant and that engaged, as soon
As ask'd for! Maid that loved would scarce do this?
Nor visit we together as we used,
When first she came to town. She loves me less
Than once she did—or loves me not at all.
Mod. I'm little skill'd, Sir Thomas, in the world:
What mean you now to do?
Clif. Remonstrate with her;

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Come to an understanding, and, at once,
If she repents her promise to be mine,
Absolve her from it— and say farewell to her.
Mod. Lo, then, your opportunity—she comes—
My cousin also :—her will I engage,
Whilst you converse together.
Clif. Nay, not yet!
My heart turns coward at the sight of her.
Stay till it finds new courage! Let them pass.
[CLIF. *and* MODUS *retire into the other arbour.*

Enter JULIA *and* HELEN.

Helen. So, Monday week will say good morn to thee
A maid, and bid good night a sober wife!
Julia. That Monday week, I trust, will never come,
That brags to make a sober wife of me!
Helen. How changed you are, my Julia!
Julia. Change makes change.
Helen. Why wedd'st thou then?
Julia. Because I promised him.
Helen. Thou lovest him?
Julia. Do I?
Helen. He's a man to love:
A right well-favour'd man!
Julia. Your point's well-favour'd,
Where did you purchase it? In Gracechurch-street?
Helen. Pshaw! never mind my point, but talk of him.
Julia. I'd rather talk with thee about the lace.
Where bought you it? In Gracechurch-street, Cheapside,
Whitechapel, Little Britain? Can't you say
Where 'twas you bought the lace?
Helen. In Cheapside, then.
And now then to Sir Thomas! He is just
The height I like a man.
Julia. Thy feather's just
The height I like a feather! Mine's too short!
What shall I give thee in exchange for it?
Helen. What shall I give thee for a minute's talk
About Sir Thomas?
Julia. Why, thy feather.

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Helen. Take it!
Clif. [*Aside to* Modus.] What, likes she not to speak of me!
Helen. And now
Let's talk about Sir Thomas—much I'm sure
He loves you.
Julia. Much I'm sure he has a right!
Those know I who would give their eyes to be
Sir Thomas, for my sake!
Helen. Such too, know I.
But 'mong them none that can compare with him,
Not one so graceful.
Julia. What a graceful set
Your feather has!
Helen. Nay, give it back to me,
Unless you pay me for't.
Julia. What was't to get?
Helen. A minute's talk with thee about Sir Thomas.
Julia. Talk of his title, and his fortune then.
Clif. [*Aside.*] Indeed! I would not listen, yet I must!
Julia. An ample fortune, Helen—I shall be
A happy wife! What routs, what balls, what masques,
What gala days!
Clif. [*Aside*]. For these she marries me!
She'll talk of these!
Julia. Think not, when I am wed,
I'll keep the house as owlet does her tower,
Alone,—when every other bird's on wing.
I'll use my palfrey, Helen; and my coach;
My barge too for excursion on the Thames:
What drives to Barnet, Hackney, Islington!
What rides to Epping, Hounslow, and Blackheath!
What sails to Greenwich, Woolwich, Fulham, Kew!
I'll set a pattern to your lady wives!
Clif. [*Aside*]. Ay, lady? Trust me, not at my expense.
Julia. And what a wardrobe! I'll have change of suits,
For every day in the year! and sets for days!
My morning dress, my noon dress, dinner dress,

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And evening dress! then will I show you lace
A foot deep, can I purchase it; if not,
I'll speedily bespeak it. Diamonds too!
Not buckles, rings, and ear-rings only,—but
Whole necklaces and stomachers of gems!
I'll shine! be sure I will.
Clif. [*Aside*]. Then shine away;
Who covets thee may wear thee; I'm not he!
Julia. And then my title! Soon as I put on
The ring, I'm Lady Clifford. So I take
Precedence of plain mistress, were she e'en
The richest heiress in the land! At town
Or country ball, you'll see me take the lead,
While wives that carry on their backs the wealth
To dower a princess, shall give place to me;—
Will I not profit, think you, by my right?
Be sure I will! marriage shall prove to me
A never-ending pageant. Every day
Shall show how I am spoused! I will be known
For Lady Clifford all the city through,
And fifty miles the country round about.
Wife of Sir Thomas Clifford, baronet,—
Not perishable knight! who when he makes
A lady of me, doubtless must expect
To see me play the part of one.
Clif. [*Coming forward.*] Most true.
But not the part which you design to play.
Julia. A list'ner, sir!
Clif. By chance, and not intent.
Your speech was forced upon mine ear, that ne'er
More thankless duty to my heart discharged!
Would for that heart it ne'er had known the sense
Which tells it 'tis a bankrupt there, where most
It coveted to be rich, and thought it was so!
O Julia! is it you? Could I have set
A coronet upon that stately brow,
Where partial nature hath already bound
A brighter circlet—radiant beauty's own—
I had been proud to see thee proud of it,
So for the donor thou hadst ta'en the gift,
Not for the gift ta'en him. Could I have pour'd

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The wealth of richest Crœsus in thy lap,
I had been blest to see thee scatter it,
So I was still thy riches paramount!
Julia. Know you me, sir?
Clif. I do! On Monday week
We were to wed;—and are, so you're content
The day that weds, wives you to be widow'd. Take
The privilege of my wife; be Lady Clifford!
Outshine the title in the wearing on't!
My coffers, lands, are all at thy command;
Wear all! but, for myself, she wears not me,
Although the coveted of every eye,
Who would not wear me for myself alone.
Julia. And do you carry it so proudly, sir?
Clif. Proudly, but still more sorrowfully, lady!
I'll lead thee to the church on Monday week.
Till then, farewell! and then,—farewell for ever!
O Julia, I have ventured for thy love,
As the bold merchant, who, for only hope
Of some rich gain, all former gains will risk.
Before I ask'd a portion of thy heart,
I peril'd all my own; and now, all's lost!
[CLIFFORD *and* MODUS *go out.*
Julia. Helen!
Helen. What ails you, sweet?
Julia. I cannot breathe—quick, loose my girdle, oh!
[*Faints.*

MASTER WALTER *and* MASTER HEARTWELL *come forward.*

Wal. Good Master Heartwell, help to take her in,
Whilst I make after him! and look to her!
Unlucky chance that took me out of town.
[*They go out severally.*

SCENE III.—*The Street.*

Enter CLIFFORD *and* STEPHEN, *meeting.*

Ste. Letters, Sir Thomas.
Clif. Take them home again,
I shall not read them now.

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Ste. Your pardon, sir,
But here is one directed strangely.
Clif. How?
Ste. "To Master Clifford, gentleman; now styled Sir Thomas Clifford, baronet."
Clif. Indeed!
Whence comes that letter?
Ste. From abroad.
Clif. Which is it?
Ste. So please you this, Sir Thomas.
Clif. Give it me.
Ste. That letter brings not news to wish him joy upon. If he was disturbed before, which I guessed by his looks he was, he is not more at ease now. His hand to his head! A most unwelcome letter! If it brings him news of disaster, fortune does not give him his deserts; for never waited servant upon a kinder master.
Clif. Stephen!
Ste. Sir Thomas!
Clif. From my door remove
The plate that bears my name.
Ste. The plate, Sir Thomas!
Clif. The plate—collect my servants and instruct them
To make out each their claims unto the end
Of their respective terms, and give them in
To my steward. Him and them apprise, good fellow,
That I keep house no more. As you go home
Call at my coachmaker's and bid him stop
The carriage I bespoke. The one I have
Send with my horses to the mart whereat
Such things are sold by auction. They're for sale—
Pack up my wardrobe—have my trunks convey'd
To the Inn in the next street—and when that's done,
Go round my tradesmen and collect their bills,
And bring them to me, at the Inn.
Ste. The Inn!
Clif. Yes; I go home no more. Why what's the matter?
What has fallen out to make your eyes fill up?
You'll get another place. I'll certify

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You're honest and industrious, and all
That a servant ought to be.
Ste. I see, Sir Thomas,
Some great misfortune has befallen you?
Clif. No!
I have health; I have strength; my reason, Stephen,
A heart that's clear in truth, with trust in God. [and
No great disaster can befal the man
Who's still possessed of these! Good fellow, leave me.
What you would learn, and have a right to know,
I would not tell you now.—Good Stephen, hence!
Mischance has fallen on me—but what of that?
Mischance has fallen on many a better man.
I prithee leave me. I grow sadder while
I see the eye with which you view my grief.
'Sdeath, they will out! I would have been a man,
Had you been less a kind and gentle one.
Now, as you love me, leave me.
Ste. Never master
So well deserved the love of him that served him.
[STEPHEN *goes out.*
Clif. Misfortune liketh company: it seldom
Visits its friends alone. Ha, Master Walter,
And ruffled too! I'm in no mood for him.

Enter MASTER WALTER.

Wal. So, Sir—Sir Thomas Clifford!—what with speed
And choler—I do gasp for want of breath!
Clif. Well, Master Walter?
Wal. You're a rash young man, sir!
Strong-headed, and wrong-headed—and I fear, sir,
Not over delicate in that fine sense
Which men of honour pride themselves upon!
Clif. Well, Master Walter?
Wal. A young woman's heart, sir,
Is not a stone to carve a posy on!
Which knows not what is writ on't—which you may buy,
Exchange, or sell, sir,—keep or give away, sir:
It is a richer—yet a poorer thing;

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Priceless to him that owns and prizes it;
Worthless, when own'd, not prized; which makes the man
That covets it, obtains it, and discards it,—
A fool, if not a villain, sir.
Clif. Well, sir!
Wal. You never loved my ward, sir!
Clif. The bright Heavens
Bear witness that I did!
Wal. The bright Heavens, sir,
Bear not false witness. That you loved her not,
Is clear,—for had you loved her, you'd have pluck'd
Your heart from out your breast, ere cast her from your heart!
Old as I am, I know what passion is.
It is the summer's heat, sir, which in vain
We look for frost in. Ice, like you, sir, knows
But little of such heat! We are wrong'd, sir, wrong'd!
You wear a sword, and so do I.
Clif. Well, sir!
Wal. You know the use, sir, of a sword?
Clif. I do.
To whip a knave, sir, or an honest man!
A wise man or a fool—atone for wrong,
Or double the amount on't! Master Walter,
Touching your ward, if wrong is done, I think
On my side lies the grievance. I would not say so
Did I not think so. As for love—look, sir,
That hand's a widower's, to its first mate sworn
To clasp no second one. As for amends, sir,
You're free to get them from a man in whom
You've been forestall'd by fortune, for the spite
Which she has vented on him, if you still
Esteem him worth your anger. Please you read
That letter. Now, sir, judge if life is dear,
To one so much a loser.
Wal. What, all gone!
Thy cousin living they reported dead!
Clif. Title and land, sir, unto which add love!
All gone, save life and honour, which ere I'll lose,
I'll let the other go.

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Wal. We're public here,
And may be interrupted. Let us seek
Some spot of privacy. Your letter, sir. [*Gives it back.*
Though fortune slights you, I'll not slight you; not
Your title or the lack of it I heed.
Whether upon the score of love or hate,
With you and you alone I settle, sir.
We've gone too far. 'Twere folly now to part
Without a reckoning.
Clif. Just as you please.
Wal. You've done
A noble lady wrong.
Clif. That lady, sir,
Has done me wrong.
Wal. Go to, thou art a boy
Fit to be trusted with a plaything, not
A woman's heart. Thou know'st not what it is!
Which I will prove to thee, soon as we find
Convenient place. Come on, sir! you shall get
A lesson that shall serve you for the rest
Of your life. I'll make you own her, sir, a piece
Of Nature's handiwork, as costly, free
From bias, flaw, and fair as ever yet
Her cunning hand turn'd out. Come on, sir! come.
[*They go out.*

END OF ACT II.

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ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Drawing Room.*

Enter LORD TINSEL *and the* EARL OF ROCHDALE.

Tin. Refuse a lord! A saucy lady this.
I scarce can credit it.
Roch. She'll change her mind.
My agent, Master Walter, is her guardian.
Tin. How can you keep that Hunchback in his office?
He mocks you.
Roch. He is useful. Never heed him.
My offer now do I present through him.
He has the title-deeds of my estates,
She'll listen to their wooing. I must have her.
Not that I love her, but that all allow
She's fairest of the fair.
Tin. Distinguish'd well:
'Twere most unseemly for a lord to love!—
Leave that to commoners. 'Tis vulgar—she's
Betroth'd, you tell me, to Sir Thomas Clifford?
Roch. Yes.
Tin. That a commoner should thwart a lord!
Yet not a commoner. A baronet
Is fish and flesh. Nine parts plebeian, and
Patrician in the tenth. Sir Thomas Clifford!
A man, they say, of brains. I abhor brains
As I do tools: They're things mechanical.
So far are we above our forefathers:—
They to their brains did owe their titles, as
Do lawyers, doctors. We to nothing owe them,
Which makes us far the nobler.
Roch. Is it so?
Tin. Believe me. You shall profit by my training;
You grow a lord apace. I saw you meet
A bevy of your former friends, who fain
Had shaken hands with you. You gave them fingers!
You're now another man. Your house is changed,—
Your table changed—your retinue—your horse—

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Where once you rode a hack, you now back blood ;—
Befits it then you also change your friends!

Enter WILLIAMS.

Will. A gentleman would see your lordship.
Tin. Sir!
What's that?
Will. A gentleman would see his lordship.
Tin. How know you, sir, his lordship is at home?
Is he at home because he goes not out?
He's not at home, though there you see him, sir,
Unless he certify that he's at home!
Bring up the name of the gentleman, and then
Your lord will know if he's at home, or not.
[WILLIAMS *goes out.*
Your man was porter to some merchant's door,
Who never taught him better breeding
Than to speak the vulgar truth! Well, sir?

WILLIAMS *having re-entered.*

Will. His name,
So please your lordship, Markham.
Tin. Do you know
The thing?
Roch. Right well! I'faith a hearty fellow,
Son to a worthy tradesman, who would do
Great things with little means; so enter'd him
In the Temple. A good fellow, on my life,
Nought smacking of his stock!
Tin. You've said enough!
His lordship's not at home. [WILLIAMS *goes out.*] We do not go
By hearts, but orders! Had he family—
Blood—though it only were a drop—his heart
Would pass for something; lacking such desert,
Were it ten times the heart it is, 'tis nought!

Enter WILLIAMS.

Will. One Master Jones hath ask'd to see your lordship.
Tin. And what was your reply to Master Jones?

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Will. I knew not if his lordship was at home.
Tin. You'll do. Who's Master Jones?
Roch. A curate's son.
Tin. A curate's? Better be a yeoman's son!
Was it the rector's son, he might be known,
Because the rector is a rising man,
And may become a bishop. He goes light.
The curate ever hath a loaded back,
He may be called the yeoman of the church,
That sweating does his work, and drudges on,
While lives the hopeful rector at his ease.
How made you his acquaintance, pray?
Roch. We read
Latin and Greek together.
Tin. Dropping them—
As, now that you're a lord, of course you've done—
Drop him—You'll say his lordship's not at home.
Will. So please your lordship, I forgot to say,
One Richard Cricket likewise is below.
Tin. Who? Richard Cricket! You must see him,
Rochdale!
A noble little fellow! A great man, sir!
Not knowing whom, you would be nobody!
I won five thousand pounds by him!
Roch. Who is he?
I never heard of him.
Tin. What! never heard
Of Richard Cricket! never heard of him!
Why, he's the jockey of Newmarket; you
May win a cup by him, or else a sweepstakes.
I bade him call upon you. You must see him.
His lordship is at home to Richard Cricket.
Roch. Bid him wait in the ante-room.
[WILLIAMS *goes out.*
Tin. The ante-room!
The best room in your house! You do not know
The use of Richard Cricket! Show him, sir,
Into the drawing-room. Your lordship needs
Must keep a racing-stud, and you'll do well
To make a friend of Richard Cricket. Well, sir,
What's that?

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Enter WILLIAMS.

Will. So please your lordship, a petition.

Tin. Hadst not a service 'mongst the Hottentots
Ere thou camest hither, friend? Present thy lord
With a petition! At mechanics' doors,
At tradesmen's, shopkeepers', and merchants' only,
Have such things leave to knock! Make thy lord's gate
A wicket to a workhouse! Let us see it—
Subscriptions to a book of poetry!
Cornelius Tense, A.M.
Which means he construes Greek and Latin, works
Problems in mathematics, can chop logic,
And is a conjuror in philosophy,
Both natural and moral.—Pshaw! a man
Whom nobody, that is, anybody, knows.
Who, think you, follows him? Why an M.D.,
An F.R.S., an F.A.S., and then
A D.D., Doctor of Divinity,
Ushering in an LL.D., which means
Doctor of Laws—their harmony, no doubt,
The difference of their trades! There's nothing here
But languages, and sciences, and arts,
Not an iota of nobility!
We cannot give our names. Take back the paper,
And tell the bearer there's no answer for him:—
That is the lordly way of saying "No."
But talking of subscriptions, here is one
To which your lordship may affix your name.

Roch. Pray, who's the object?

Tin. A most worthy man!
A man of singular deserts; a man
In serving whom your lordship will serve me,—
Signor Cantata.

Roch. He's a friend of yours?

Tin. O, no, I know him not! I've not that pleasure.
But Lady Dangle knows him; she's his friend.
He will oblige us with a set of concerts,
Six concerts to the set.—The set three guineas.
Your lordship will subscribe?

Roch. O, by all means.

Tin. How many sets of tickets? Two at least.

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You'll like to take a friend? I'll set you down
Six guineas to Signor Cantata's concerts.
And now, my Lord, we'll to him,—then we'll walk.
Roch. Nay, I would wait the lady's answer.
Tin. Wait! take an excursion to the country; let
Her answer wait for you.
Roch. Indeed!
Tin. Indeed!
Befits a lord nought like indifference.
Say an estate should fall to you, you'd take it,
As it concerned more a stander by
Than you. As you're a lord, be sure you ever
Of that make little other men make much of;
Nor do the thing they do, but the right contrary.
Where the distinction else 'twixt them and you?
[*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in Master Heartwell's House.*

MASTER WALTER *discovered looking through title-deeds and papers.*

Wal. So falls out everything as I would have it,
Exact in place and time. This lord's advances
Receives she,—as, I augur, in the spleen
Of wounded pride she will,—my course is clear.
She comes—all's well—the tempest rages still.

JULIA *enters, and paces the room in a state of high excitement.*

Julia. What have my eyes to do with water? Fire
Becomes them better!
Wal. True.
Julia. Yet, must I weep
To be so monitor'd, and by a man!
A man that was my slave! whom I have seen
Kneel at my feet from morn till noon, content
With leave to only gaze upon my face,
And tell me what he read there,—till the page
I knew by heart, I 'gan to doubt I knew,
Emblazon'd by the comment of his tongue!

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And he to lesson me! Let him come here
On Monday week! He ne'er leads me to church!
I would not profit by his rank, or wealth,
Though kings might call him cousin, for their sake!
I'll show him I have pride!
Wal. You're very right!
Julia. He would have had to-day our wedding-day!
I fix'd a month from this. He pray'd and pray'd;
I dropp'd a week. He pray'd and pray'd the more!
I dropp'd a second one. Still more he pray'd!
And I took off another week,—and now
I have his leave to wed, or not to wed!
He'll see that I have pride!
Wal. And so he ought.
Julia. O! for some way to bring him to my foot!
But he should lie there! Why, 'twill go abroad
That he has cast me off. That there should live
The man could say so! Or that I should live
To be the leavings of a man!
Wal. Thy case
I own a hard one.
Julia. Hard! 'Twill drive me mad!
His wealth and title! I refused a lord—
I did! that privily implored my hand,
And never cared to tell him on't! So much
I hate him now, that lord should not in vain
Implore my hand again!
Wal. You'd give it him?
Julia. I would.
Wal. You'd wed that lord?
Julia. That lord I'd wed;—
Or any other lord,—only to show him
That I could wed above him!
Wal. Give me your hand
And word to that.
Julia. There! Take my hand and word!
Wal. That lord hath offered you his hand again.
Julia. He has?
Wal. Your father knows it: he approves of him.
There are the title-deeds of the estates,
Sent for my jealous scrutiny. All sound,—

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No flaw, or speck, that e'en the lynx-eyed law
Itself could find. A lord of many lands!
In Berkshire half a county; and the same
In Wiltshire, and in Lancashire! Across
The Irish Sea a principality!
And not a rood with bond or lien on it!
Wilt give that lord a wife? Wilt make thyself
A countess? Here's the proffer of his hand.
Write thou content, and wear a coronet!
Julia. [*Eagerly.*] Give me the paper.
Wal. There! Here's pen and ink.
Sit down. Why do you pause? A flourish of
The pen, and you're a countess.
Julia. My poor brain
Whirls round and round! I would not wed him now,
Were he more lowly at my feet to sue
Than e'er he did!
Wal. Wed whom?
Julia. Sir Thomas Clifford.
Wal. You're right.
Julia. His rank and wealth are roots to doubt;
And while they lasted, still the weed would grow,
Howe'er you pluck'd it. No! That's o'er—That's done.
Was never lady wrong'd so foul as I! [*Weeps.*
Wal. Thou'rt to be pitied.
Julia. [*Aroused.*] Pitied! Not so bad
As that.
Wal. Indeed thou art, to love the man
That spurns thee!
Julia. Love him! Love! If hate could find
A word more harsh than its own name, I'd take it,
To speak the love I bear him! [*Weeps.*
Wal. Write thy own name,
And show *him* how near akin thy hate's to hate.
Julia. [*writes.*] 'Tis done!
Wal. 'Tis well! I'll come to you anon! [*Goes out.*
Julia. [*Alone.*] I'm glad 'tis done! I'm very glad 'tis done!
I've done the thing I ought. From my disgrace
This lord shall lift me 'bove the reach of scorn—

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That idly wags his tongue, where wealth and state
Need only beckon to have crowds to laud!
Then how the tables change! The hand he spurn'd
His betters take! Let me remember that!
I'll grace my rank! I will! I'll carry it
As I was born to it! I warrant none
Shall say it fits me not:—but, one and all
Confess I wear it bravely, as I ought!
And he shall hear it! ay! and he shall see it!
I will roll by him in an equipage
Would mortgage his estate—but he shall own
His slight of me was my advancement! Love me!
He never loved me! if he had, he ne'er
Had given me up! Love's not a spider's web
But fit to mesh a fly—that you can break
By only blowing on't! He never loved me!
He knows not what love is—or, if he does,
He has not been o'er chary of his peace!
And that he'll find when I'm another's wife,
Lost!—lost to him for ever! Tears again!
Why should I weep for him? Who make their woes
Deserve them! what have I to do with tears?

Enter HELEN.

Helen. News, Julia, news!
Julia. What! is't about Sir Thomas?
Helen. Sir Thomas, say you? He's no more Sir Thomas!
That cousin lives, as heir to whom, his wealth
And title came to him.
Julia. Was he not dead?
Helen. No more than I am dead.
Julia. I would 'twere not so.
Helen. What say you, Julia?
Julia. Nothing!
Helen. I could kiss
That cousin! couldn't you, Julia?
Julia. Wherefore?
Helen. Why
For coming back to life again, as 'twere
Upon his cousin to revenge you.

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Julia. Helen!

Helen. Indeed 'tis true. With what a sorry grace
The gentleman will bear himself without
His title! Master Clifford! Have you not
Some token to return him? Some love-letter?
Some brooch? Some pin? Some anything? I'll be
Your messenger, for nothing but the pleasure
Of calling him plain "Master Clifford."

Julia. Helen!

Helen. Or has he aught of thine? Write to him, Julia,
Demanding it! Do, Julia, if you love me;
And I'll direct it in a schoolboy's hand,
As round as I can write, "To Master Clifford."

Julia. Helen!

Helen. I'll think of fifty thousand ways
To mortify him! I've a twentieth cousin,
A care-for-nought at mischief. Him I'll set,
With twenty other madcaps like himself,
To walk the streets the traitor most frequents,
And give him salutation as he passes—
"How do you, Master Clifford?"

Julia. [*Highly incensed.*] Helen!

Helen. Bless me!

Julia. I hate you, Helen!

Enter Modus.

Mod. Joy for you, fair lady!
Our baronet is now plain gentleman,
And hardly that, not master of the means
To bear himself as such! The kinsman lives
Whose only rumour'd death gave wealth to him,
And title. A hard creditor he proves,
Who keeps strict reckoning—will have interest,
As well as principal. A ruin'd man
Is now Sir Thomas Clifford.

Helen. I'm glad on't.

Mod. And so am I. A scurvy trick it was
He served you, madam. Use a lady so!
I merely bore with him. I never liked him.

Helen. No more did I. No, never could I think

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He look'd his title.

Mod. No, nor acted it.
If rightly they report, he ne'er disbursed
To entertain his friends, 'tis broadly said,
A hundred pounds in the year. He was most poor
In the appointments of a man of rank,
Possessing wealth like his. His horses, hacks!
His gentleman, a footman! and his footman,
A groom! The sports that men of quality
And spirit countenance, he kept aloof from,
From scruple of economy, not taste,—
As racing and the like. In brief, he lack'd
Those shining points that, more than name, denote
High breeding: and, moreover, was a man
Of very shallow learning.

Julia. Silence, sir!
For shame!

Helen. Why, Julia!

Julia. Speak not to me! Poor!
Most poor! I tell you, sir, he was the making
Of fifty gentlemen—each one of whom
Were more than peer for thee! His title, sir,
Lent him no grace he did not pay it back!
Though it had been the highest of the high,
He would have look'd it, felt it, acted it,
As thou could'st ne'er have done! When found you
You liked him not? It was not ere to-day! [out
Or that base spirit I must reckon yours
Which smiles where it would scowl—can stoop to hate
And fear to show it! He was your better, sir,
And is!—Ay, is! though stripp'd of rank and wealth,
His nature's 'bove or fortune's love or spite,
To blazon or to blur it! [*Retires.*]

Mod. [*To* HELEN.] I was told
Much to disparage him—I know not wherefore.

Helen. And so was I, and know as much the cause.

Enter MASTER WALTER, *with parchments.*

Wal. Joy, my Julia!
Impatient love has foresight! Lo you here
The marriage deeds fill'd up, except a blank

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To write your jointure. What you will, my girl!
Is this a lover? Look! Three thousand pounds
Per annum for your private charges! Ha!
There's pin money! Is this a lover? Mark
What acres, forests, tenements, are tax'd
For your revenue; and so set apart,
That finger cannot touch them, save thine own.
Is this a lover? What good fortune's thine!
Thou dost not speak; but, 'tis the way with joy!
With richest heart, it has the poorest tongue!
Mod. What great good fortune's this you speak of, sir?
Wal. A coronet, Master Modus! You behold
The wife elect, sir, of no less a man
Than the new Earl of Rochdale—heir of him
That's recently deceased.
Helen. My dearest Julia,
Much joy to you!
Mod. All good attend you, madam!
Wal. This letter brings excuses from his lordship,
Whose absence it accounts for. He repairs
To his estate in Lancashire, and thither
We follow.
Julia. When, sir?
Wal. Now. This very hour.
Julia. This very hour! Oh cruel, fatal haste!
Wal. "O cruel, fatal haste!" What meanest thou?
Have I done wrong to do thy bidding, then?
I have done no more. Thou wast an off-cast bride,
And would'st be an affianced one—thou art so!
Thou'dst have the slight that mark'd thee out for scorn,
Converted to a means of gracing thee—
It is so! If our wishes come too soon,
What can make sure of welcome? In my zeal
To win thee thine, thou know'st, at any time
I'd play the steed, whose will to serve his lord,
With his last breath gives his last bound for him!
Since only noon have I despatch'd what well
Had kept a brace of clerks, and more, on foot,—
And then, perhaps, had been to do again!—
Not finish'd sure, complete—the compact firm,
As fate itself had seal'd it!

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Julia. Give you thanks!
Though 'twere my death! my death!
Wal. Thy death! indeed,
For happiness like this, one well might die!
Take thy lord's letter! Well?

Enter THOMAS, *with a letter.*

Thos. This letter, sir,
The gentleman that served Sir Thomas Clifford—
Or him that was Sir Thomas—gave to me
For Mistress Julia.
Julia. Give it me!
[*Throwing away the one she holds.*
Wal. [*Snatching it.*] For what?
Would'st read it? He's a bankrupt! stripp'd of title,
House, chattels, lands and all? A naked bankrupt,
With neither purse, nor trust! Would'st read his letter?
A beggar! Yea, a beggar! fasts, unless
He dines on alms! How durst he send thee a letter!
A fellow cut on this hand, and on that;
Bows and is cut again, and bows again!
Who pays you fifty smiles for half a one,—
And that given grudgingly! To send you letter!
I burst with choler! Thus I treat his letter!
[*Tears and throws it on the ground.*
So! I was wrong to let him ruffle me;
He is not worth the spending anger on!
I prithee, Master Modus, use despatch,
And presently make ready for our ride.
You, Helen, to my Julia look—a change
Of dresses will suffice. She must have new ones,
Matches for her new state! Haste, friends. My Julia!
Why stand you poring there upon the ground?
Time flies. Your rise astounds you? Never heed—
You'll play my lady countess like a queen!
[*They go out.*

END OF ACT III.

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ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Earl of Rochdale's.*

Enter HELEN.

Helen. I'm weary wandering from room to room ;
A castle after all is but a house—
The dullest one when lacking company.
Were I at home, I could be company
Unto myself. I see not Master Walter.
He's ever with his ward. I see not her.
By Master Walter's will she bide, alone.
My father stops in town. I can't see him.
My cousin makes his books his company.
I'll go to bed and sleep. No—I'll stay up
And plague my cousin into making love !
For, that he loves me, shrewdly I suspect.
How dull he is that hath not sense to see
What lies before him, and he'd like to find !
I'll change my treatment of him. Cross him, where
Before I used to humour him. He comes,
Poring upon a book. What's that you read ?

Enter MODUS.

Mod. Latin, sweet cousin.
Helen. 'Tis a naughty tongue,
I fear, and teaches men to lie.
Mod. To lie !
Helen. You study it. You call your cousin sweet,
And treat her as you would a crab. As sour
'Twould seem you think her, so you covet her !
Why how the monster stares, and looks about !
You construe Latin, and can't construe that.
Mod. I never studied women.
Helen. No ; nor men.
Else would you better know their ways : nor read
In presence of a lady. [*Strikes the book from his hand.*
Mod. Right you say,
And well you served me, cousin, so to strike

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The volume from my hand. I own my fault;
So please you,—may I pick it up again?
I'll put it in my pocket!
Helen. Pick it up.
He fears me as I were his grandmother!
What is the book?
Mod. 'Tis Ovid's Art of Love.
Helen. That Ovid was a fool!
Mod. In what?
Helen. In that:
To call that thing an art, which art is none.
Mod. And is not love an art?
Helen. Are you a fool,
As well as Ovid? Love an art! No art
But taketh time and pains to learn. Love comes
With neither. Is't to hoard such grain as that,
You went to college? Better stay at home,
And study homely English.
Mod. Nay, you know not
The argument.
Helen. I don't? I know it better
Than ever Ovid did! The face,—the form,—
The heart,—the mind we fancy, cousin; that's
The argument! Why, cousin, you know nothing.
Suppose a lady were in love with thee,
Couldst thou by Ovid, cousin, find it out?
Couldst find it out, wast thou in love thyself?
Could Ovid, cousin, teach thee to make love?
I could, that never read him. You begin
With melancholy; then to sadness; then
To sickness; then to dying—but not die!
She would not let thee, were she of my mind;
She'd take compassion on thee. Then for hope;
From hope to confidence; from confidence
To boldness;—then you'd speak; at first entreat;
Then urge; then flout; then argue; then enforce;
Make prisoner of her hand; besiege her waist;
Threaten her lips with storming; keep thy word
And carry her! My sampler 'gainst thy Ovid!
Why cousin, are you frighten'd, that you stand
As you were stricken dumb? The case is clear,

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You are no soldier. You'll ne'er win a battle.
You care too much for blows!
Mod. You wrong me there.
At school I was the champion of my form,
And since I went to college—
Helen. That for college!
Mod. Nay, hear me!
Helen. Well? What, since you went to college?
You know what men are set down for, who boast
Of their own bravery. Go on, brave cousin:
What, since you went to college? Was there not
One Quentin Halworth there? You know there was,
And that he was your master!
Mod. He my master!
Thrice was he worsted by me.
Helen. Still was he
Your master.
Mod. He allow'd I had the best!
Allow'd it, mark me! nor to me alone,
But twenty I could name.
Helen. And master'd you
At last! Confess it, cousin, 'tis the truth.
A proctor's daughter you did both affect—
Look at me and deny it! Of the twain
She more affected you;—I've caught you now,
Bold cousin! Mark you? opportunity
On opportunity she gave you, sir,—
Deny it if you can!—but though to others,
When you discoursed of her, you were a flame;
To her you were a wick that would not light,
Though held in the very fire! And so he won her—
Won her, because he woo'd her like a man.
For all your cuffings, cuffing you again
With most usurious interest. Now, sir,
Protest that you are valiant!
Mod. Cousin Helen!
Helen. Well, sir?
Mod. The tale is all a forgery!
Helen. A forgery!
Mod. From first to last; ne'er spoke I
To a proctor's daughter while I was at college

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Helen. 'Twas a scrivener's then—or somebody's.
But what concerns it whose? Enough, you loved her!
And, shame upon you, let another take her!
Mod. Cousin, I tell you, if you'll only hear me,
I loved no woman while I was at college—
Save one, and her I fancied ere I went there.
Helen. Indeed! Now I'll retreat, if he's advancing.
Comes he not on! O what a stock's the man?
Well, cousin?
Mod. Well! What more would'st have me say?
I think I've said enough.
Helen. And so think I.
I did but jest with you. You are not angry?
Shake hands! Why, cousin, do you squeeze me so?
Mod. [*letting her go.*] I swear I squeezed you not!
Helen. You did not?
Mod. No,
I'll die if I did!
Helen. Why then you did not, cousin,
So let's shake hands again—[*he takes her hand as before.*]
O go and now
Read Ovid! Cousin, will you tell me one thing:
Wore lovers ruffs in master Ovid's time?
Behoved him teach them, then, to put them on;—
And that you have to learn. Hold up your head!
Why cousin, how you blush! Plague on the ruff!
I cannot give't a set. You're blushing still!
Why do you blush, dear cousin? So!—'twill beat me!
I'll give it up.
Mod. Nay, prithee don't—try on!
Helen. And if I do, I fear you'll think me bold.
Mod. For what?
Helen. To trust my face so near to thine.
Mod. I know not what you mean.
Helen. I'm glad you don't!
Cousin, I own right well behaved you are,
Most marvellously well behaved! They've bred
You well at college. With another man
My lips would be in danger! Hang the ruff!
Mod. Nay, give it up, nor plague thyself, dear cousin.
Helen. Dear fool! [*throws the ruff on the ground.*]

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I swear the ruff is good for just
As little as its master! There!—'Tis spoil'd—
You'll have to get another. Hie for it,
And wear it in the fashion of a wisp,
Ere I adjust it for thee! Farewell, cousin!
You'd need to study Ovid's Art of Love.
[HELEN *goes out.*

Mod. [*Solus.*] Went she in anger! I will follow her,—
No, I will not! Heigho! I love my cousin!
O would that she loved me! Why did she taunt me
With backwardness in love? What could she mean?
Sees she I love her, and so laughs at me,
Because I lack the front to woo her? Nay,
I'll woo her then! Her lips shall be in danger,
When next she trusts them near me! Look'd she at me
To-day, as never did she look before!
A bold heart, Master Modus! 'Tis a saying,
A faint one never won fair lady yet!
I'll woo my cousin, come what will on't. Yes:
[*Begins reading again, throws down the book.*
Hang Ovid's Art of Love! I'll woo my cousin!
[*Goes out.*

SCENE II.—*The Banqueting-room in the Earl of Rochdale's Mansion.*

Enter MASTER WALTER *and* JULIA.

Wal. This is the banqueting-room. Thou see'st as far
It leaves the last behind, as that excels
The former ones. All is proportion here
And harmony! Observe! The massy pillars
May well look proud to bear the gilded dome.
You mark those full-length portraits? They're the heads,
The stately heads, of his ancestral line.
Here o'er the feast they haply still preside!
Mark those medallions! Stand they forth or not
In bold and fair relief? Is not this brave?

Julia. [*abstractedly.*] It is.

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Wal. It should be so. To cheer the blood
That flows in noble veins is made the feast
That gladdens here! You see this drapery?
'Tis richest velvet! Fringe and tassels, gold!
Is not this costly?
Julia. Yes.
Wal. And chaste, the while?
Both chaste and costly?
Julia. Yes.
Wal. Come hither! There's a mirror for you. See!
One sheet from floor to ceiling! Look into it,
Salute its mistress! Dost not know her?
Julia. [*sighing deeply.*] Yes!
Wal. And sighest thou to know her? Wait until
To-morrow, when the banquet shall be spread
In the fair hall; the guests—already bid,
Around it; here, her lord; and there, herself;
Presiding o'er the cheer that hails him bridegroom,
And her the happy bride! Dost hear me?
Julia. [*sighing still more deeply.*] Yes.
Wal. These are the day-rooms only, we have seen,
For public and domestic uses kept.
I'll show you now the lodging rooms.
[*Goes, then turns and observes* JULIA *standing perfectly abstracted.*
You're tired.
Let it be till after dinner then. Yet one
I'd like thee much to see—the bridal chamber.
[JULIA *starts, crosses her hands upon her breast, and looks upwards.*
I see you're tired: yet it is worth the viewing,
If only for the tapestry which shows
The needle like the pencil glows with life;
[*Brings down chairs, they sit.*
The story's of a page who loved the dame
He served—a princess!—Love's a heedless thing!
That never takes account of obstacles;
Makes plains of mountains, rivulets of seas,
That part it from its wish. So proved the page,
Who from a state so lowly, look'd so high,—
But love's a greater lackwit still than this.

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Say it aspires—that's gain! Love stoops—that's loss!
You know what comes. The princess loved the page.
Shall I go on, or here leave off?
Julia. Go on.
Wal. Each side of the chamber shows a different stage
Of this fond page, and fonder lady's love*.
First—no, it is not that.
Julia. Oh, recollect!
Wal. And yet it is.
Julia. No doubt it is. What is't?
Wal. He holds to her a salver, with a cup;
His cheek more mantling with his passion, than
The cup with the ruby wine. She heeds him not,
For too great heed of him:—but seems to hold
Debate betwixt her passion and her pride,
That's like to lose the day. You read it in
Her vacant eye, knit brow, and parted lips,
Which speak a heart too busy all within
To note what's done without. Like you the tale?
Julia. I list to every word.
Wal. The next side paints
The page upon his knee. He has told his tale;
And found that when he lost his heart, he play'd
No losing game: but won a richer one!
There may you read in him, how love would seem
Most humble when most bold,—you question which

---

* In representation, the passages following this are curtailed—and the scene runs as follows:—Master Walter continues—

The first side shows their passion in the dawn—
In the next side 'tis shining open day—
In the third there's clouding—I but touch on these
To make a long tale brief, and bring thee to
The last side.
Julia. What shows that?
Wal. The fate of love
That will not be advised.—The scene's a dungeon,
Its tenant is the page—he lies in fetters.
Julia. Hard!
Hard as the steel, the hands that put them on! &c.

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Appears to kiss her hand—his breath, or lips!
In her you read how wholly lost is she
Who trusts her heart to love. Shall I give o'er?
Julia. Nay, tell it to the end. Is't melancholy?
Wal. To answer that, would mar the story.
Julia. Right.
Wal. The third side now we come to.
Julia. What shows that? [sire
Wal. The page and princess still. But stands her
Between them. Stern he grasps his daughter's arm,
Whose eyes like fountains play; while through her tears
Her passion shines, as through the fountain drops,
The sun! His minions crowd around the page!
They drag him to a dungeon.
Julia. Hapless youth!
Wal. Hapless indeed, that's twice a captive! heart
And body both in bonds. But that's the chain,
Which balance cannot weigh, rule measure, touch
Define the texture of, or eye detect,
That's forged by the subtle craft of love!
No need to tell you that he wears it. Such
The cunning of the hand that plied the loom,
You've but to mark the straining of his eye,
To feel the coil yourself!
Julia. I feel't without!
You've finish'd with the third side; now the fourth!
Wal. It brings us to a dungeon, then.
Julia. The page,
The thrall of love, more than the dungeon's thrall,
Is there?
Wal. He is. He lies in fetters.
Julia. Hard!
Hard as the steel the hands that put them on.
Wal. Some one unrivets them!
Julia. The princess? 'Tis!
Wal. It is another page.
Julia. It is herself!
Wal. Her skin is fair; and his is berry-brown.
His locks are raven black; and hers are gold.
Julia. Love's cunning of disguises! spite of locks,
Skin, vesture,—it is she, and only she!

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What will not constant woman do for love
That's loved with constancy! Set her the task,
Virtue approving, that will baffle her!
O'ertax her stooping, patience, courage, wit!
My life upon it, 'tis the princess' self,
Transform'd into a page!
Wal. The dungeon door
Stands open, and you see beyond—
Julia. Her father!
Wal. No; a steed.
Julia. [*starting up.*] O, welcome steed,
My heart bounds at the thought of thee! Thou comest
To bear the page from bonds to liberty.
What else?
Wal. [*rising.*] The story's told.
Julia. Too briefly told;
O happy princess, that had wealth and state
To lay them down for love! Whose constant love
Appearances approved, not falsified!
A winner in thy loss as well as gain.
Wal. Weighs love so much?
Julia. What would you weigh 'gainst love
That's true? Tell me with what you'd turn the scale?
Yea, make the index waver? Wealth? A feather!
Rank? Tinsel against bullion in the balance!
The love of kindred? That to set 'gainst love!
Friendship comes nearest to't; but put it in,
Friendship will kick the beam!—weigh nothing 'gainst it!
Weigh love against the world!
Yet are they happy that have nought to say to it.
Wal. And such a one art thou. Who wisely wed,
Wed happily. The love thou speak'st of,
A flower is only, that its season has
Which they must look to see the withering of,
Who pleasure in its budding and its bloom!
But wisdom is the constant evergreen
Which lives the whole year through! Be that your flower!

Enter a Servant.

Well

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Serv. My lord's secretary is without.
He brings a letter for her ladyship,
And craves admittance to her.
Wal. Show him in.
Julia. No.
Wal. Thou must see him. To show slight to him,
Were slighting him that sent him. Show him in!
[Servant *goes out.*
Some errand proper for thy private ear,
Besides the letter he may bring. What mean
This paleness and this trembling? Mark me, Julia!
If, from these nuptials, which thyself invited—
Which at thy seeking came—thou would'st be freed,
Thou hast gone too far! Receding were disgrace,
Sooner than see thee suffer which, the hearts
That love thee most, would wish thee dead! Reflect!
Take thought! collect thyself! With dignity
Receive thy bridegroom's messenger! for sure
As dawns to-morrow's sun, to-morrow night
Sees thee a wedded bride! [*Goes out.*
Julia. [*Alone.*] A wedded bride!
Is it a dream? Is it a phantasm? 'Tis
Too horrible for reality! for aught else
Too palpable! O would it were a dream!
How would I bless the sun that waked me from it!
I perish! Like some desperate mariner
Impatient of a strange and hostile land,
Who rashly hoists his sail and puts to sea,
And being fast on reefs and quicksands borne,
Essays in vain once more to make the land,
Whence wind and current drive him,—I'm wreck'd
By mine own act! What! no escape? no hope?
None! I must e'en abide these hated nuptials!
Hated!—Ah! own it, and then curse thyself!
That madest the bane thou loathest—for the love
Thou bear'st to one who never can be thine!
Yes—love! Deceive thyself no longer. False
To say 'tis pity for his fall,—respect,
Engender'd by a hollow world's disdain,
Which hoots whom fickle fortune cheers no more!
'Tis none of these: 'tis love—and if not love,

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Why then idolatry! Ay, that's the name
To speak the broadest, deepest, strongest passion,
That ever woman's heart was borne away by!
He comes! Thou'dst play the lady,—play it now!

Enter a Servant, *conducting* CLIFFORD, *plainly attired as the* EARL OF ROCHDALE'S *Secretary.*

Servant. His lordship's secretary. [Servant *goes out.*
Julia. Speaks he not?
Or does he wait for orders to unfold
His business? Stopp'd his business till I spoke,
I'd hold my peace for ever!
[CLIFFORD *kneels; presenting a letter.*
Does he kneel?
A lady am I to my heart's content!
Could he unmake me that which claims his knee,
I'd kneel to him,—I would! I would!—Your will?
Clif. This letter from my lord.
Julia. O fate! who speaks?
Clif. The secretary of my lord.
Julia. I breathe!
I could have sworn 'twas he!
[*Makes an effort to look at him, but is unable.*
So like the voice—
I dare not look, lest there the form should stand!
How came he by that voice? 'Tis Clifford's voice,
If ever Clifford spoke! My fears come back—
Clifford the secretary of my lord!
Fortune hath freaks, but none so mad as that!
It cannot be—it should not be!—a look,
And all were set at rest.
[*Tries to look at him again, but cannot.*
So strong my fears,
Dread to confirm them takes away the power
To try and end them! Come the worst, I'll look.
[*She tries again; and again is unequal to the task.*
I'd sink before him if I met his eye!
Clif. Will't please your ladyship to take the letter?
Julia. There Clifford speaks again! Not Clifford's heart
Could more make Clifford's voice! Not Clifford's tongue

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And lips more frame it into Clifford's speech !
A question, and 'tis over ! Know I you ?
Clif. Reverse of fortune, lady, changes friends ;
It turns them into strangers. What I am
I have not always been !
Julia. Could I not name you ?
Clif. If your disdain for one, perhaps too bold
When hollow fortune call'd him favourite,—
Now by her fickleness perforce reduced
To take an humble tone, would suffer you—
Julia. I might ?
Clif. You might !
Julia. Oh, Clifford ! is it you ?
Clif. Your answer to my lord. [*Gives the letter.*
Julia. Your lord ! [*Mechanically taking it.*
Clif. Wilt write it ?
Or, will it please you send a verbal one ?
I'll bear it faithfully.
Julia. You'll bear it ?
Clif. Madam,
Your pardon, but my haste is somewhat urgent.
My lord's impatient, and to use despatch
Were his repeated orders.
Julia. Orders ? Well,
I'll read the letter, sir. 'Tis right you mind
His lordship's orders. They are paramount !
Nothing should supersede them !—stand beside them !
They merit all your care, and have it ! Fit,
Most fit they should ! Give me the letter, sir.
Clif. You have it, madam.
Julia. So ! How poor a thing
I look ! so lost, while he is all himself !
Have I no pride ? [*She rings, the* Servant *enters.*
Paper, and pen, and ink !
If he can freeze, 'tis time that I grow cold !
I'll read the letter.
[*Opens it, and holds it as about to read it.*
Mind his orders ! So !
Quickly he fits his habits to his fortunes !
He serves my lord with all his will ! His heart's
In his vocation. So ! Is this the letter ?

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'Tis upside down—and here I'm poring on't!
Most fit I let him see me play the fool!
Shame. Let me be myself!
[*A Servant enters with materials for writing.*
A table, sir,
And chair.
[*The Servant brings a table and chair, and goes out. She sits a while, vacantly gazing on the letter—— then looks at* CLIFFORD.
How plainly shows his humble suit!
It fits not him that wears it! I have wrong'd him!
He can't be happy—does not look it! is not.
That eye which reads the ground is argument
Enough! He loves me. There I let him stand,
And I am sitting!
[*Rises, takes a chair, and approaches* CLIFFORD.
Pray you take a chair.
[*He bows, as acknowledging and declining the honour. She looks at him a while.*
Clifford, why don't you speak to me? [*She weeps.*
Clif. I trust
You're happy.
Julia. Happy! Very, very happy!
You see I weep, I am so happy! Tears
Are signs, you know, of nought but happiness!
When first I saw you, little did I look
To be so happy! Clifford!
Clif. Madam?
Julia. Madam!
I call thee Clifford, and thou call'st me madam!
Clif. Such the address my duty stints me to.
Thou art the wife elect of a proud Earl—
Whose humble secretary sole, am I.
Julia. Most right! I had forgot! I thank you, sir,
For so reminding me; and give you joy,
That what, I see, had been a burthen to you,
Is fairly off your hands.
Clif. A burthen to me!
Mean you yourself? Are you that burthen, Julia?
Say that the sun's a burthen to the earth!

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Say that the blood's a burthen to the heart!
Say health's a burthen, peace, contentment, joy,
Fame, riches, honours! everything that man
Desires, and gives the name of blessing to!—
E'en such a burthen, Julia were to me,
Had fortune let me wear her.

Julia. [*Aside.*] On the brink
Of what a precipice I'm standing! Back,
Back! while the faculty remains to do't!
A minute longer, not the whirlpool's self
More sure to suck thee down! One effort! There!

[*She returns to her seat, recovers her self-possession, takes up the letter, and reads.*

To wed to-morrow night! Wed whom? A man
Whom I can never love! I should before
Have thought of that. To-morrow night! This hour
To-morrow! How I tremble! Happy bands
To which my heart such freezing welcome gives,
As sends an ague through me! At what means
Will not the desperate snatch! What's honour's price?
Nor friends, nor lovers,—no, nor life itself!
Clifford! This moment leave me!

[CLIFFORD *retires up the stage out of* JULIA'S *sight.*

Is he gone!
O docile lover! Do his mistress' wish
That went against his own! Do it so soon!—
Ere well 'twas utter'd! No good-bye to her!
No word! no look! 'Twas best that he so went!
Alas, the strait of her, who owns that best,
Which last she'd wish were done? What's left me now?
To weep! To weep!

[*Leans her head upon her arm, which rests upon the desk,—her other arm hanging listlessly at her side.* CLIFFORD *comes down the stage, looks a moment at her, approaches her, and kneeling, takes her hand.*

Clif. My Julia!

Julia. Here again,
Up! up! By all thy hopes of Heaven go hence!
To stay's perdition to me! Look you, Clifford!

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Were there a grave where thou art kneeling now,
I'd walk into't, and be inearth'd alive,
Ere taint should touch my name! Should some one come
And see thee kneeling thus! Let go my hand!
Remember, Clifford, I'm a promised bride—
And take thy arm away! It has no right
To clasp my waist! Judge you so poorly of me,
As think I'll suffer this? My honour, sir!
[*She breaks from him, quitting her seat.*
I'm glad you've forced me to respect myself—
You'll find that I can do so!

Clif. I was bold—
Forgetful of your station and my own;
There was a time I held your hand unchid!
There was a time I might have clasp'd your waist—
I had forgot that time was past and gone!
I pray you, pardon me!

Julia. [*softened.*] I do so, Clifford.

Clif. I shall no more offend.

Julia. Make sure of that.
No longer is it fit thou keep'st thy post
In's lordship's household. Give it up! A day—
An hour remain not in it!

Clif. Wherefore?

Julia. Live
In the same house with me, and I another's?
Put miles, put leagues between us! The same land
Should not contain us. Oceans should divide us—
With barriers of constant tempests—such
As mariners durst not tempt! O Clifford!
Rash was the act so light that gave me up,
That stung a woman's pride, and drove her mad—
Till in her frenzy she destroy'd her peace!
Oh, it was rashly done! Had you reproved—
Expostulated,—had you reason'd with me—
Tried to find out what was indeed my heart,—
I would have shown it—you'd have seen it. All
Had been as nought can ever be again!

Clif. Lovest thou me, Julia?

Julia. Dost thou ask me, Clifford?

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Clif. These nuptials may be shunn'd—
Julia. With honour?
Clif. Yes.
Julia. Then take me! Stop—hear me, and take me then!
Let not thy passion be my counsellor!
Deal with me, Clifford, as my brother. Be
The jealous guardian of my spotless name!
Scan thou my cause as 'twere thy sister's. Let
Thy scrutiny o'erlook no point of it,—
Nor turn it over once, but many a time:—
That flaw, speck,—yea—the shade of one,—a soil
So slight, not one out of a thousand eyes
Could find it out,—may not escape thee; then
Say if these nuptials can be shunn'd with honour!
Clif. They can.
Julia. Then take me, Clifford! [*They embrace.*
Wal. [*entering.*] Ha! What's this?
Ha! treason! What! my baronet that was,
My secretary now? Your servant, sir!
Is't thus you do the pleasure of your lord,—
That for your service, feeds you, clothes you, pays you!
Or takest thou but the name of his dependant?
What's here?—a letter. Fifty crowns to one
A forgery! I'm wrong. It is his hand.
This proves thee double traitor!
Clif. Traitor!
Julia. Nay,
Control thy wrath, good Master Walter! Do,—
And I'll persuade him to go hence—[MASTER WALTER *retires up the stage.*] I see
For me thou bearest this, and thank thee, Clifford!
As thou hast truly shown thy heart to me,
So truly I to thee have open'd mine!
Time flies! To-morrow! If thy love can find
A way, such as thou said'st, for my enlargement,
By any means thou canst, apprise me of it,—
And soon as shown, I'll take it.
Wal. Is he gone?
Julia. He is this moment. If thou covet'st me,
Win me, and wear me! May I trust thee? Oh!

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If that's thy soul, that's looking through thine eyes,
Thou lovest me, and I may !—I sicken, lest
I never see thee more !

Clif. As life is mine,
The ring that on thy wedding finger goes
No hand but mine shall place there !

Wal. Lingers he ?

Julia. For my sake, now away ! And yet a word.
By all thy hopes most dear, be true to me !
Go now !—yet stay ! Clifford, while you are here,
I'm like a bark distress'd and compassless,
That by a beacon steers ; when you're away,
That bark alone, and tossing miles at sea !
Now go ! Farewell ! My compass—beacon—land !
When shall my eyes be bless'd with thee again !

Clif. Farewell ! [*Goes out.*

Julia. Art gone ! All's chance—all's care—all's darkness ! [*Is led off by* MASTER WALTER.

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Earl of Rochdale's.*

Enter HELEN *and* FATHOM.

Fath. The long and the short of it is this—if she marries this Lord, she'll break her heart ! I wish you could see her, madam. Poor lady !

Helen. How looks she, prithee ?

Fath. Marry, for all the world like a dripping wet cambric handkerchief ! She has no colour nor strength in her ; and does nothing but weep— poor lady !

Helen. Tell me again what said she to thee ?

Fath. She offered me all she was mistress of to take the letter to Master Clifford. She drew her purse from

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her pocket—the ring from her finger—she took her very ear-rings out of her ears—but I was forbidden, and refused. And now I'm sorry for it! Poor lady!

Helen. Thou should'st be sorry. Thou hast a hard heart, Fathom.

Fath. I, madam! My heart is as soft as a woman's. You should have seen me when I came out of her chamber—poor lady!

Helen. Did you cry?

Fath. No; but I was as near it as possible. I a hard heart! I would do anything to serve her, poor sweet lady!

Helen. Will you take her letter, asks she you again?

Fath. No—I am forbid.

Helen. Will you help Master Clifford to an interview with her!

Fath. No—Master Walter would find it out.

Helen. Will you contrive to get me into her chamber?

Fath. No—you would be sure to bring me into mischief.

Helen. Go to! You would do nothing to serve her. You a soft heart! You have no heart at all! You feel not for her!

Fath. But I tell you I do—and good right I have to feel for her. I have been in love myself.

Helen. With your dinner!

Fath. I would it had been! My pain would soon have been over, and at little cost. A fortune I squandered upon her!—trinkets—trimmings—treatings—what swallowed up the revenue of a whole year! Wasn't I in love? Six months I courted her, and a dozen crowns all but one did I disburse for her in that time! Wasn't I in love? An hostler—a tapster—and a constable, courted her at the same time, and I offered to cudgel the whole three of them for her! Wasn't I in love?

Helen. You are a valiant man, Fathom.

Fath. Am not I? Walks not the earth the man I am afraid of.

Helen. Fear you not Master Walter?

Fath. No.

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Helen. You do.

Fath. I don't.

Helen. I'll prove it to you. You see him breaking your young mistress's heart, and have not the manhood to stand by her.

Fath. What could I do for her?

Helen. Let her out of prison. It were the act of a man.

Fath. That man am I!

Helen. Well said, brave Fathom!

Fath. But my place!—

Helen. I'll provide thee with a better one.

Fath. 'Tis a capital place! So little to do, and so much to get for't. Six pounds in the year; two suits of livery; shoes and stockings, and a famous larder. He'd be a bold man that would put such a place in jeopardy. My place, Madam, my place!

Helen. I tell thee I'll provide thee with a better place. Thou shalt have less to do, and more to get. Now, Fathom, hast thou courage to stand by thy mistress?

Fath. I have!

Helen. That's right.

Fath. I'll let my lady out.

Enter MASTER WALTER *unperceived.*

Helen. That's right. When, Fathom?

Fath. To-night.

Helen. She is to be married to-night.

Fath. This evening then. Master Walter is now in the library, the key is on the outside, and I'll lock him in.

Helen. Excellent! You'll do it?

Fath. Rely upon it. How he'll stare when he finds himself a prisoner, and my young lady at liberty!

Helen. Most excellent! You'll be sure to do it?

Fath. Depend upon me! When Fathom undertakes a thing, he defies fire and water—

Wal. [*Coming forward.*] Fathom!

Fath. Sir!

Wal. Assemble straight the servants.

Fath. Yes, sir!

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Wal. Mind,
And have them in the hall when I come down.
Fath. Yes, sir!
Wal. And see you do not stir a step,
But where I order you.
Fath. Not an inch, sir!
Wal. See that you don't—away! So, my fair mistress, [FATHOM *goes out.*
What's this you have been plotting? An escape
For mistress Julia?
Helen. I avow it.
Wal. Do you?
Helen. Yes; and moreover to your face I tell you,
Most hardly do you use her.
Wal. Verily!
Helen. I wonder where's her spirit! Had she mine,
She would not take't so easily. Do you mean
To force this marriage on her?
Wal. With your leave.
Helen. You laugh.
Wal. Without it then. I don't laugh now.
Helen. If I were she, I'd find a way to escape.
Wal. What would you do?
Helen. I'd leap out of the window!
Wal. Your window should be barr'd.
Helen. I'd cheat you still!
I'd hang myself ere I'd be forced to marry!
Wal. Well said! you shall be married, then, to-night.
Helen. Married to-night!
Wal. As sure as I have said it.
Helen. Two words to that. Pray who's to be my bridegroom?
Wal. A daughter's husband is her father's choice.
Helen. My father's daughter ne'er shall wed such husband!
Wal. Indeed!
Helen. I'll pick a husband for myself.
Wal. Indeed!
Helen. Indeed, sir; and indeed again!
Wal. Go dress you for the marriage ceremony.
Helen. But, Master Walter, what is it you mean?

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Enter MODUS.

Wal. Here comes your cousin;—he shall be your bridesman!
The thought's a sudden one,—that will excuse
Defect in your appointments. A plain dress,—
So 'tis of white,—will do.
Helen. I'll dress in black.
I'll quit the castle.
Wal. That you shall not do.
Its doors are guarded by my lord's domestics,
Its avenues—its grounds: what you must do,
Do with a good grace. In an hour, or less,
Your father will be here. Make up your mind
To take with thankfulness the man he gives you.
Now, [*Aside*] if they find not out how beat their hearts,
I have no skill, not I, in feeling pulses. [*Goes out.*
Helen. Why, cousin Modus! What! will you stand by
And see me forced to marry? Cousin Modus!
Have you not got a tongue? Have you not eyes?
Do you not see I'm very—very ill,
And not a chair in all the corridor?
Mod. I'll find one in the study.
Helen. Hang the study!
Mod. My room's at hand. I'll fetch one thence.
Helen. You shan't!
I'd faint ere you came back!
Mod. What shall I do?
Helen. Why don't you offer to support me? Well?
Give me your arm—be quick! [MODUS *offers his arm.*
Is that the way
To help a lady when she's like to faint?
I'll drop unless you catch me! [MODUS *supports her.*
That will do;
I'm better now—[MODUS *offers to leave her*] don't leave me! Is one well
Because one's better? Hold my hand. Keep so.
I'll soon recover so you move not. Loves he—[*Aside.*
Which I'll be sworn he does, he'll own it now.
Well, cousin Modus?

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Mod. Well, sweet cousin!
Helen. Well?
You heard what Master Walter said?
Mod. I did.
Helen. And would you have me marry? Can't you speak?
Say yes or no.
Mod. No, cousin.
Helen. Bravely said!
And why, my gallant cousin?
Mod. Why?
Helen. Ah, why?—
Women, you know, are fond of reasons—why
Would you not have me marry? How you blush!
Is it because you do not know the reason?
You mind me of a story of a cousin
Who once her cousin such a question ask'd.
He had not been to college though—for books,
Had pass'd his time in reading ladies' eyes,
Which he could construe marvellously well,
Though writ in language all symbolical.
Thus stood they once together, on a day—
As we stand now—discoursed as we discourse,—
But with this difference,—fifty gentle words
He spoke to her, for one she spoke to him!—
What a dear cousin! well, as I did say,
As now I question'd thee, she question'd him.
And what was his reply? To think of it
Sets my heart beating—'twas so kind a one!
So like a cousin's answer—a dear cousin!
A gentle, honest, gallant, loving cousin!
What did he say? A man might find it out,
Though never read he Ovid's Art of Love.
What did he say? He'd marry her himself!
How stupid are you, cousin! Let me go!
Mod. You are not well yet?
Helen. Yes.
Mod. I'm sure you're not?
Helen. I'm sure I am.
Mod. Nay, let me hold you, cousin!
I like it.

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Helen. Do you? I would wager you
You could not tell me why you like it. Well?
You see how true I know you! How you stare!]
What see you in my face to wonder at?
Mod. A pair of eyes!
Helen. At last he'll find his tongue— [*Aside.*
And saw you ne'er a pair of eyes before?
Mod. Not such a pair.
Helen. And why?
Mod. They are so bright!
You have a Grecian nose.
Helen. Indeed.
Mod. Indeed!
Helen. What kind of mouth have I?
Mod. A handsome one.
I never saw so sweet a pair of lips!
I ne'er saw lips at all till now, dear cousin!
Helen. Cousin, I'm well,—you need not hold me now.
Do you not hear? I tell you I am well!
I need your arm no longer—take't away!
So tight it locks me, 'tis with pain I breathe!
Let me go, cousin! Wherefore do you hold
Your face so close to mine? What do you mean?
Mod. You've question'd me, and now I'll question you.
Helen. What would you learn?
Mod. The use of lips.
Helen. To speak.
Mod. Nought else?
Helen. How bold my modest cousin grows!
Why, other use know you?
Mod. I do!
Helen. Indeed!
You're wondrous wise? And pray what is it?
Mod. This! [*Attempts to kiss her.*
Helen. Soft! My hand thanks you, cousin—for my lips
I keep them for a husband!—Nay, stand off!
I'll not be held in manacles again!
Why do you follow me?
Mod. I love you, cousin!

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Helen. O cousin, say you so! That's passing strange!
Falls out most crossly—is a dire mishap—
A thing to sigh for, weep for, languish for,
And die for!
Mod. Die for!
Helen. Yes, with laughter, cousin!
For, cousin, I love you!
Mod. And you'll be mine?
Helen. I will.
Mod. Your hand upon it.
Helen. Hand and heart.
Hie to thy dressing-room, and I'll to mine—
Attire thee for the altar—so will I.
Whoe'er may claim me, thou'rt the man shall have me.
Away! Despatch! But hark you, ere you go,
Ne'er brag of reading Ovid's Art of Love!
Mod. And cousin! stop—one little word with you!
[*She returns, he snatches a kiss.*]
[*They go out severally.*

SCENE II.—*Julia's Chamber.*

Enter JULIA.

Julia. No word from him, and evening now set in!
He cannot play me false! His messenger
Is dogg'd—or letter intercepted. I'm
Beset with spies!—No rescue!—No escape!—
The hour at hand that brings my bridegroom home!
No relative to aid me! friend to counsel me!
[*A knock at the door.*
Come in.

Enter two Female Attendants.

Your will?
First Attendant. Your toilet waits, my lady;
'Tis time you dress.
Julia. 'Tis time I die! [*A peal of bells.*] What's that?
First Attendant. Your wedding bells, my lady.

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Julia. Merrily
They ring my knell!
[Second Attendant *presents an open case.*
And pray you what are these?
Second Attendant. Your wedding jewels.
Julia. Set them by.
Second Attendant. Indeed
Was ne'er a braver set! A necklace, brooch,
And ear-rings all of brilliants, with a hoop
To guard your wedding ring.
Julia. 'Twould need a guard
That lacks a heart to keep it!
Second Attendant. Here's a heart
Suspended from the necklace—one huge diamond
Imbedded in a host of smaller ones!
Oh! how it sparkles!
Julia. Show it me! Bright heart,
Thy lustre, should I wear thee, will be false,—
For thou the emblem art of love and truth,—
From her that wears thee unto him that gives thee.
Back to thy case! Better thou ne'er shouldst leave it—
Better thy gems a thousand fathoms deep
In their native mine again, than grace my neck,
And lend thy fair face to palm off a lie!
First Attendant. Wilt please you dress?
Julia. Ah! in infected clothes
New from a pest-house! Leave me! If I dress,
I dress alone! O for a friend! Time gallops!
[Attendants *go out.*
He that should guard me is mine enemy!
Constrains me to abide the fatal die,
My rashness, not my reason cast! He comes,
That will exact the forfeit! Must I pay it?—
E'en at the cost of utter bankruptcy!
What's to be done? Pronounce the vow that parts
My body from my soul! To what it loathes
Links that, while this is link'd to what it loves!
Condemned to such perdition! What's to be done?
Stand at the altar in an hour from this!
An hour thence seated at his board—a wife
Thence!—frenzy's in the thought! What's to be done?

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Enter MASTER WALTER.

Wal. What! run the waves so high? Not ready yet!
Your lord will soon be here! The guests collect.
Julia. Show me some way to 'scape these nuptials! Do it!
Some opening for avoidance or escape,—
Or to thy charge I'll lay a broken heart!
It may be, broken vows, and blasted honour!
Or else a mind distraught!
Wal. What's this?
Julia. The strait
I'm fallen into my patience cannot bear!
It frights my reason—warps my sense of virtue!
Religion! changes me into a thing,
I look at with abhorring!
Wal. Listen to me.
Julia. Listen to me, and heed me! If this contract
Thou hold'st me to—abide thou the result!
Answer to heaven for what I suffer!—act!
Prepare thyself for such calamity
To fall on me, and those whose evil stars
Have link'd them with me, as no past mishap,
However rare, and marvellously sad,
Can parallel! Lay thy account to live
A smileless life, die an unpitied death—
Abhorr'd, abandon'd of thy kind,—as one
Who had the guarding of a young maid's peace,—
Look'd on and saw her rashly peril it;
And when she saw her danger, and confess'd
Her fault, compell'd her to complete her ruin!
Wal. Hast done!
Julia. Another moment, and I have.
Be warn'd! Beware how you abandon me
To myself! I'm young, rash, inexperienced! tempted
By most insufferable misery!
Bold, desperate, and reckless! Thou hast age,
Experience, wisdom, and collectedness,—
Power, freedom,—every thing that I have not,
Yet want, as none e'er wanted! Thou canst save me,
Thou ought'st! thou must! I tell thee at his feet

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I'll fall a corse—ere mount his bridal bed!
So choose betwixt my rescue and my grave;—
And quickly too! The hour of sacrifice
Is near! Anon the immolating priest
Will summon me! Devise some speedy means
To cheat the altar of its victim. Do it!
Nor leave the task to me!

Wal. Hast done?

Julia. I have.

Wal. Then list to me—and silently, if not
With patience.—[*Brings chairs for himself and her.*]
How I watch'd thee from thy childhood,
I'll not recall to thee. Thy father's wisdom—
Whose humble instrument I was—directed
Your nonage should be pass'd in privacy,
From your apt mind that far outstripp'd your years,
Fearing the taint of an infected world;—
For, in the rich grounds, weeds once taking root,
Grow strong as flowers. He might be right or wrong!
I thought him right; and therefore did his bidding.
Most certainly he loved you—so did I;
Ay! well as I had been myself your father!

[*His hand is resting upon his knee,* JULIA *attempts to take it—he withdraws it—looks at her—she hangs her head.*

Well; you may take my hand! I need not say
How fast you grew in knowledge, and in goodness,—
That hope could scarce enjoy its golden dreams
So soon fulfilment realized them all!
Enough. You came to womanhood. Your heart,
Pure as the leaf of the consummate bud,
That's new unfolded by the smiling sun,
And ne'er knew blight nor canker!

[JULIA *attempts to place her other hand on his shoulder—he leans from her—looks at her—she hangs her head again.*

Put it there!
Where left I off? I know! When a good woman
Is fitly mated, she grows doubly good,
How good soe'er before! I found the man
I thought a match for thee; and, soon as found,

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Proposed him to thee. 'Twas your father's will,
Occasion offering, you should be married
Soon as you reach'd to womanhood.—You liked
My choice—accepted him.—We came to town;
Where, by important matter summon'd thence,
I left you an affianced bride!
Julia. You did!
You did! [*Leans her head upon her hand and weeps.*
Wal. Nay, check thy tears! Let judgment now,
Not passion, be awake. On my return,
I found thee—what? I'll not describe the thing
I found thee then! I'll not describe my pangs
To see thee such a thing! The engineer
Who lays the last stone of his sea-built tower,
It cost him years and years of toil to raise,—
And, smiling at it, tells the winds and waves
To roar and whistle now—but, in a night,
Beholds the tempest sporting in its place—
May look aghast, as I did!
Julia. [*falling on her knees.*] Pardon me!
Forgive me! pity me!
Wal. Resume thy seat. [*Raises her.*]
I pity thee; perhaps not thee alone
It fits to sue for pardon.
Julia. Me alone!
None other!
Wal. But to vindicate myself,
I name thy lover's stern desertion of thee.
What wast thou then with wounded pride? A thing
To leap into a torrent! throw itself
From a precipice! rush into a fire! I saw
Thy madness—knew to thwart it were to chafe it—
And humour'd it to take that course, I thought,
Adopted, least 'twould rue!
Julia. 'Twas wisely done.
Wal. At least 'twas for the best!
Julia. To blame thee for it,
Was adding shame to shame! But, Master Walter!
These nuptials!—must they needs go on?
Servant. [*entering.*] More guests
Arrive.

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Wal. Attend to them. [Servant *goes out.*
Julia. Dear Master Walter!
Is there no way to escape these nuptials?
Wal. Know'st not
What with these nuptials comes? Hast thou forgot?
Julia. What?
Wal. Nothing!—I did tell thee of a thing.
Julia. What was it?
Wal. To forget it was a fault!
Look back and think.
Julia. I can't remember it.
Wal. Fathers, make straws your children! Nature's nothing!
Blood nothing! Once in other veins it runs,
It no more yearneth for the parent flood,
Than doth the stream that from the source disparts.
Talk not of love instinctive—what you call so
Is but the brat of custom! Your own flesh
By habit cleaves to you—without,
Hath no adhesion! [*Aside.*] So; you have forgot
You have a father, and are here to meet him!
Julia. I'll not deny it.
Wal. You should blush for't.
Julia. No!
No! no: hear, Master Walter! what's a father
That you've not been to me? Nay, turn not from me,
For at the name a holy awe I own,
That now almost inclines my knee to earth!
But thou to me, except a father's name,
Hast all the father been: the care—the love—
The guidance—the protection of a father.
Canst wonder, then, if like thy child I feel,—
And feeling so, that father's claim forget
Whom ne'er I knew, save by the name of one?
Oh turn to me, and do not chide me! or
If thou wilt chide, chide on! but turn to me!
Wal. [*struggling with emotion.*] My Julia!
[*Embraces her.*
Julia. Now, dear Master Walter, hear me!
Is there no way to 'scape these nuptials?
Wal. Julia,

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A promise made admits not of release,
Save by consent or forfeiture of those
Who hold it—so it should be ponder'd well
Before we let it go. Ere man should say
I broke the word I had the power to keep,
I'd lose the life I had the power to part with!
Remember, Julia, thou and I to-day
Must to thy father of thy training render
A strict account. While honour's left to us,
We have something—nothing, having all but that.
Now for thy last act of obedience, Julia!
Present thyself before thy bridegroom! [*She assents.*]
Good!
My Julia's now herself! Show him thy heart,
And to his honour leave't to set thee free
Or hold thee bound. Thy father will be by!
[*They go out severally.*

SCENE III.—*The Banqueting Room.*

Enter MASTER WALTER *and* MASTER HEARTWELL.

Heart. Thanks, Master Walter! Ne'er was child more bent
To do her father's will, you'll own, than mine:
Yet never one more froward.

Wal. All runs fair—
Fair may all end! To-day you'll learn the cause
That took me out of town. But soft awhile,—
Here comes the bridegroom, with his friends, and here
The all-obedient bride.

Enter on one hand JULIA, *and on the other hand* LORD ROCHDALE *with* LORD TINSEL, *and friends—afterwards* CLIFFORD.

Roch. Is she not fair?

Tin. She'll do. Your servant, lady! Master Walter,
We're glad to see you. Sirs, you're welcome all
What wait they for? Are we to wed or not?

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We're ready—why don't they present the bride?
I hope they know she is to wed an earl.
Roch. Should I speak first?
Tin. Not for your coronet!
I, as your friend, may make the first advance.
We've come here to be married. Where's the bride?
Wal. There stands she, lord; if 'tis her will to wed,
His lordship's free to take her.
Tin. Not a step!
I, as your friend, may lead her to your lordship.
Fair lady, by your leave.
Julia. No! not to you.
Tin. I ask your hand to give it to his lordship.
Julia. Nor to his lordship—save he will accept
My hand without my heart! but I'll present
My knee to him, and, by his lofty rank,
Implore him now to do a lofty deed
Will lift its stately head above his rank,—
Assert him nobler yet in worth than name,—
And, in the place of an unwilling bride,
Unto a willing debtor make him lord,—
Whose thanks shall be his vassals, night and day
That still shall wait upon him!
Tin. What means this?
Julia. What is't behoves a wife to bring her lord?
Wal. A whole heart, and a true one.
Julia. I have none!
Not half a heart—the fraction of a heart!
Am I a woman it befits to wed?
Wal. Why, where's thy heart?
Julia. Gone—out of my keeping!
Lost—past recovery: right and title to it—
And all given up! and he that's owner on't,
So fit to wear it, were it fifty hearts,
I'd give it to him all!
Wal. Thou dost not mean
His lordship's secretary?
Julia. Yes. Away
Disguises! in that secretary know
The master of the heart, of which, the poor,

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Unvalued, empty casket, at your feet,—
Its jewel gone,—I now despairing throw! [*Kneels.*]
Of his lord's bride he's lord! lord paramount!
To whom her virgin homage first she paid,—
'Gainst whom rebell'd in frowardness alone,
Nor knew herself how loyal to him, till
Another claim'd her duty—then awoke
To sense of all she owed him—all his worth—
And all her undeservings!

Tin. Lady, we came not here to treat of hearts,—
But marriage; which, so please you, is with us
A simple joining, by the priest, of hands.
A ring's put on; a prayer or two is said;
You're man and wife,—and nothing more! For hearts,
We oft'ner do without, than with them, lady!

Clif. So does not wed this lady!

Tin. Who are you?

Clif. I'm secretary to the Earl of Rochdale.

Tin. My lord!

Roch. I know him not—

Tin. I know him now—
Your lordship's rival! Once Sir Thomas Clifford.

Clif. Yes, and the bridegroom of that lady then,
Then loved her—loves her still!

Julia. Was lov'd by her—
Though then she knew it not!—is loved by her,
As now she knows, and all the world may know!

Tin. We can't be laugh'd at. We are here to wed,
And shall fulfil our contract.

Julia. Clifford!

Clif. Julia!
You will not give your hand?

[*A pause*—JULIA *seems utterly lost.*

Wal. You have forgot
Again. You have a father!

Julia. Bring him now,—
To see thy Julia justify thy training,
And lay her life down to redeem her word!

Wal. And so redeems her all! Is it your will,
My lord, these nuptials should go on?

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Roch. It is.
Wal. Then is it mine they stop!
Tin. I told your lordship
You should not keep a Hunchback for your agent.
Wal. Thought like my father, my good lord, who said
He would not have a Hunchback for his son,—
So do I pardon you the savage slight!
My lord, that I am not as straight as you,
Was blemish neither of my thought nor will,
My head nor heart. It was no act of mine,—
Yet did it curdle nature's kindly milk
E'en where 'tis richest—in a parent's breast—
To cast me out to heartless fosterage,
Not heartless always, as it prov'd—and give
My portion to another! the same blood—
But I'll be sworn, in vein, my lord, and soul—
Although his trunk did swerve no more than yours—
Not half so straight as I.
Tin. Upon my life
You've got a modest agent, Rochdale! Now
He'll prove himself descended—mark my words—
From some small gentleman!
Wal. And so you thought,
Where nature play'd the churl, it would be fit
That fortune play'd it too. You would have had
My lord absolve me of my agency!
Fair lord, the flaw did cost me fifty times—
A hundred times my agency:—but all's
Recover'd. Look, my lord, a testament
To make a pension of his lordship's rent roll!
It is my father's, and was left by him,
In case his heir should die without a son,
Then to be open'd. Heaven did send a son
To bless the heir. Heaven took its gift away.
He died—His father died. And Master Walter—
The unsightly agent of his lordship there—
The Hunchback whom your lordship would have stripp'd
Of his agency,—is now the Earl of Rochdale!
Tin. We've made a small mistake here. Never mind,
'Tis nothing in a lord.

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